SIX OCCASIONAL

SERMONS

UPON

The following SUBJECTS.

VIZ.

SERMON I.
Of the Neceſſity of Religious Principles.

SERMON II.
Of the Degrees of Charity due to Men of different Religious Perſuaſions.

SERMON III.
Of the Maintenance due to the Miniſters of the Goſpel.

SERMON IV.
Of the Nature of Subſcription to Articles of Religion.

SERMON V.
Of Things belonging to the Peace and Welfare of Nations.

SERMON VI.
Of Moral Advantages to be derived from Travelling in Italy.

By the Rev. ANDREW BURNABY, D.D.
VICAR OF GREENWICH,
AND
Late Chaplain to the BRITISH FACTORY at LEGHORN.

LONDON:
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SERMON I.

Of the Neceſſity of religious Principles.

Preached at St. Mary's, before the Univerſity of Cambridge, June 23, 1776.

PSALM cxi. Ver. 10.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom.

THE plain meaning of this paſſage implies the neceſſity of governing our actions by principle, and of deducing this principle from religion, or the fear of God.

I. THE neceſſity of governing our actions by principle ariſes from the following conſiderations: firſt, from the inſufficiency of our feelings and affections, ſingly referred to, to guide us with rectitude through life: ſecondly,

from the want of merit, which even the beſt actions, eventually conſidered, would be liable to, ſuppoſing them to proceed from any other motive.

First, Our feelings and affections are raſh and precipitate, and ſeldom operate conſiſtently, or according to the truth of things.

The beſt affection, if not reſtrained and regulated by principle, may expoſe us to error and inconvenience. Pity itſelf, if not under ſome regulation, may eaſily become the ſource of diſorder. When we ſee the aſſaſſin under the hand of juſtice, or incorrigible offenders led away to the puniſhment ſo juſtly due to their crimes, our hearts bleed, and we turn from ſuch miſerable objects. Pity alone would incline us to releaſe and let them go--- and what to do? to trouble and diſturb the order of ſociety afreſh, ſubvert the common happineſs of mankind, and lie in wait to ſhed the blood of the innocent and defenceleſs.---- Our feelings and affections, moreover, are variable and inconſtant, ſo as to operate either too powerfully, or too weakly, to be conſiſtent with

with that juſt medium upon which the rectitude of our actions depends.

CONSIDER how exceedingly changeable our affections are.---Human nature is compoſed of ſuch various ingredients, that it is liable to be diſordered by the ſlighteſt change or accident. Weather or ſickneſs ſo alters our diſpoſitions, that we are ſcarcely the ſame beings for two moments ſucceſſively. Theſe render us alternately ſplenetic and chearful, contented and diſſatisfied, ſociable and friendly with thoſe we converſe with one while; then fretful and out of humour with ourſelves and all about us.

NOTHING is more ſtriking than the inconſiſtency and contradiction that appears in the characters of ſome men: they are ſo totally different on ſome occaſions from what we find them on others, that there is ſcarcely a poſſibility of knowing them. This ariſes chiefly from their ſuffering themſelves to be led away by their paſſions and inclinations; for as theſe are perpetually varying, either from phyſical or other cauſes, they never preſerve long

the ſame tone of mind, or ſupport any fixed or conſtant character.

HENCE men are ſaints one day, and libertines the next; are now ſeen proſtrate before the altar, then found aſſociated with vice and irreligion, engaged in their impious practices. Juſt as their humours take them, they are virtuous or otherwiſe, good and religious by fits and ſtarts, but never regularly and uniformly ſo for any conſiderable length of time together.

FURTHER; our feelings and affections are not only raſh and inconſtant, but ſuch as are mild and gentle are commonly contraſted and overborne by thoſe that are violent and tumultuous.

LET any one deſcribe to himſelf the ſudden impetuoſity of anger, or luſt, or avarice, or ambition, or envy, or jealouſy, or any other violent paſſion;---and conſider how frequently theſe overbear and get the better of the gentle affections, and he will be truly ſenſible of the danger of being governed by the impulſes of feeling.---Will any one work'd up to rage or anger, or tortured and diſtracted with jealouſy, give

give ear to the pleadings of pity or compaſſion, if not controuled by ſome ſuperior authority? It is to be feared, not. The nature of the one is too violent and impetuous to be awed or reſtrained by the other. A miſer devoted to the love of gain, or an ambitious man thirſting after honours and diſtinctions, if not checked by principle, will ſeldom attend to the complaining remonſtrance of the orphan or widow, or regard the injuſtice and injury he may be doing them in order to accompliſh his purpoſes.

OUR feelings and affections therefore are, on ſeveral accounts, inſufficient to guide us with rectitude through life, and evince the neceſſity of governing our actions by principle.

THIS neceſſity appears, ſecondly, from the want of merit, which even the beſt actions, eventually conſidered, would be liable to, ſuppoſing them to proceed from any other motive.

OUR bleſſed Saviour, ſpeaking to his diſciples in the ſeventeenth chapter of St. Luke, hath expreſſed himſelf in the following man-

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ner: "*So likewiſe ye, when ye ſhall have done* "*all thoſe things which are commanded you,* "*ſay, we are unprofitable ſervants, we have* "*done that which was our duty to do.*"---- This, taken in that abſolute ſenſe intended by our Saviour, is undeniably and literally true. No perſon, however ſtudious he may be to perform his duty, can ſtrictly claim any merit with God, by reaſon of his being able to do no more than what he is obliged to. But in a relative ſenſe, a man may be ſaid to have merit, when, out of a religious motive, he endeavours to fulfil that obligation which God hath impoſed upon him, becauſe God is ſo gracious as to accept ſuch ſervice as poſitively meritorious.

THUS, when men are chaſte and temperate from a principle or ſenſe of duty, notwithſtanding there is nothing in ſuch conduct but what they are ſtrictly, and independently of any other conſideration whatſoever, obliged to; yet, through God's gracious acceptance, it becomes meritorious relatively to them, and entitles them to infinite reward and happineſs. But if they purſue ſuch plan, not out of any ſenſe of duty or religious motive, but merely

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out of natural inclination, and becauſe they are ſo conſtituted or framed as to have a ſatiſfaction therein; then they can, by no plea or pretence whatſoever, claim any merit with, or reward from, God, becauſe they only pleaſe themſelves, and gratify their own inclinations, without ſhewing any regard to either God or their duty. Is any one then charitable, or merciful, or in any other reſpect virtuous or religious? if he is ſo from a religious principle, a principle of fear and obedience to God, he is truly righteous, his righteouſneſs will be accepted; but if he is ſo out of no other motive, than that it is agreeable to his temperament or diſpoſition, without any regard had to the divine will, where is his merit? he only follows his own propenſity or inclination, without making any ſacrifice.--- Some men are compaſſionate and piteous by nature, nor can be witneſſes to the ſufferings of their fellow-creatures without an anxious deſire to relieve them. The diſpoſitions of ſuch are undoubtedly amiable, and it is much to be regretted that all have not the ſame ſenſibility. But yet, who gave them this ſenſibility, or to whom are they indebted for ſuch fine feelings? Is it not to the Author of their nature? Let

them then be thankful to God for his goodneſs towards them; but unleſs they are charitable from better motives, motives of obedience, or a conſcientious regard to their duty, let them not exult in, or build upon, ſuch works of charity.

LIBERTINES may pretend, if they pleaſe, that there can be no merit in reſiſting our inclinations, or in not complying with thoſe feelings and paſſions with which God hath endowed us; yet it is undeniable, even upon principles by which we eſtimate human merit, where any one doth deny himſelf certain gratifications out of regard to the deſire or command of another, or from a principle of obedience, that ſuch bears eſſentially a better character than another who acts contrary thereto, ſuppoſing even the perſon enjoining ſuch command to be himſelf not immediately intereſted in the performance of it. A ſon who is obedient to his father's injunctions, though theſe injunctions may affect only his own private happineſs, his health, reputation, or the like, diſcovers a better diſpoſition than another who is diſobedient thereto, becauſe he ſhows a filial regard, a pious ſenſe of his

his duty.----A man only occaſionally virtuous out of principle or a ſenſe of duty, ſeems to have more merit than another who is uniformly ſo by temperament or conſtitution only, without any regard had to God or his law, becauſe this laſt only gratifies his own inclination, without ſhewing any deference or reſpect to a Supreme Being.

THIS explains in ſome meaſure the thirteenth article of our national religion, concerning works before juſtification, which hath been frequently controverted, but not always, I think, fairly ſtated. The words of it are as follow, viz. "Works done before the grace "of Chriſt, and the inſpiration of his Spirit, "are not pleaſant to God, foraſmuch as they "ſpring not of faith in Jeſus Chriſt, neither "do they make men meet to receive grace.-- "Yea rather for that they are not done as "God hath willed and commanded them to "be done, we doubt not but they have the "nature of ſin."

THE meaning of this article doth not imply, that good works are abſolutely, and in themſelves unacceptable to God; but that, in reſpect

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of the agent, they can have no merit with God, unleſs they are performed out of principle;--- which principle, ſince the promulgation of the goſpel, muſt be fear operating by faith; becauſe God hath willed and commanded all perſons to believe in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. Any one therefore, to whom an opportunity of hearing the goſpel hath been duely offered, neglecting to act from this principle, can do nothing acceptable to God; neither can he be meet to receive grace, which is the gift of God promiſed only to the ſincere and devout prayers of thoſe who unfeignedly believe, becauſe in ſo doing he is not actuated by that principle, neither employeth thoſe means which God hath enjoined him.

Such is the meaning, I apprehend, of this article, and nothing can be more unexceptionable; for whatever any action may be in itſelf, and with regard to others, yet, in reſpect of the agent, it muſt be the intention or principle that fixes its real merit. Where an action indeed is evidently deſtructive in itſelf, no principle or intention whatſoever will excuſe the immorality of it, becauſe men are in ſome reſpect accountable for their judgments

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as well as their intentions, ſeeing that it depends upon themſelves, *i.e.* upon their endeavours, application and impartiality, to form right or erroneous judgments. Where this is not the caſe however, the merit of it will be determined by the motive or principle.

PERHAPS it may be proper to obſerve in this place, that the whole of the foregoing reaſoning proceeds upon a ſuppoſition of men's following their inclinations, without endeavouring either to correct their bad, or improve their good ones; for where they do this, they undoubtedly have merit: but this implies principle, which principle diſcovers itſelf in the exertion and application of ſuch endeavours. The higheſt point of merit that men ſeem capable of arriving at, indeed, in the preſent imperfect ſtate, ſeems to conſiſt herein, viz. in reſiſting the bad affections, cultivating the good ones, and regulating the whole by a principle or ſenſe of duty; which principle, as it is aſſerted by the Pſalmiſt, and as I ſhall endeavour to ſhew hereafter, can be no other than religion, or the fear of God.

WERE

WERE the caſe different from what it is here repreſented, merit would be accidental and fortuitous. In ſome it would depend upon temperament and conſtitution, becauſe ſome are by nature of more gentle diſpoſitions than others; their frames are of finer texture, and they are more ſuſceptible of tender feelings. Such therefore are conſtitutionally more prone to compaſſion than other men; they delight more in acts of charity, and in tender and ſocial offices.---In others it would depend upon climate and ſituation; the degrees of virtue would vary with thoſe of the latitude. In warm and ſouthern climates there is a ſtronger degree of ſenſibility than in cold and northern ones. In theſe, on the other hand, men are leſs irritable, leſs paſſionate, and commonly more chaſte and continent. Even the particular ſtate of countries would affect, in ſome meaſure, the merit and demerit of mankind; becauſe it is a known truth, that commerce, learning, and civil arts, have a conſiderable influence upon the feelings and paſſions of the human breaſt.

BUT it is not to be ſuppoſed that merit can be affected by ſuch accidental and precarious circumſtances;

circumſtances; it muſt reſt upon ſurer ground, upon the exerciſe and uſe of our moral powers. The ſum of what has been ſaid therefore evidently proves the neceſſity of governing our actions by principle.

II. I PROCEED, ſecondly, to ſhew that this principle muſt be deduced from religion, or the fear of God.

FEAR, in the paſſage under contemplation, implies an awful ſenſe of the divine nature; a dread of diſobeying or offending him. It is a mixture of love and terror, of gratitude and reverence, equally remote from ſuperſtition on one hand, and irreligion on another. Conſidered in this ſenſe, it is the only ſure and unerring rule of life, the only principle either of true wiſdom or true happineſs.---Properly ſpeaking indeed, no principle, unleſs it may be reſolved into this, will be equivalent to, or anſwer any good purpoſe; it will be found vague and indeterminate, dependent upon the wills and fancies of men, and the different modes and opinions which they may be pleaſed to adopt.

SUPPOSE,

Suppose, for example, honour to be laid down as a principle of conduct, how uncertain muſt the rule be! Honour in the abſtract is nothing but that reſpect and veneration which we entertain for ſuperior merit: it is a ſenſation or feeling ariſing in the mind, ſubſequently to the impreſſion of certain images: it can never be conſidered therefore as a principle. The love and deſire of it indeed may influence the actions of men, and ſo far it may be regarded in ſuch light. But if we recollect how unjuſtly and undeſervedly honour is beſtowed, and that it is frequently with-holden where it is moſt due, this will ſerve to convince us of its inſufficiency.---Neither will laws and civil inſtitutions be found more effectual.---Laws only affect the exteriour behaviour of men; they reſtrain not their interiour thoughts. They comprehend alſo, for the moſt part, only general caſes, it not being poſſible that they ſhould extend to each particular one; are liable to be evaded, or perverted and miſconſtrued. The very idea of law, however, is connected with that of principle; for principle muſt be ſuppoſed to influence both the makers and executors of law, otherwiſe there

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can be no aſſurance either of their goodneſs, or of their being equally and impartially executed.---Nothing, in ſhort, will be found adequate or ſufficient to the purpoſes of life, but religion, or the fear of God. This will comprehend all caſes and all perſons; will influence not only the actions of men, but even the very thoughts whence theſe actions proceed. If avarice, or ambition, or luſt, or cruelty, begin to kindle in our boſoms, religion, or the fear of God, will caſt a ſudden damp upon them, and prevent them from burſting into a flame. Drooping virtue will be cheriſhed and up-raiſed, and pullulating vice checked and reſtrained by it. Falſehood will be ſilenced and awed by the voice of it; and the maſk of hypocriſy drop off when it approaches.

IN ſuch as are unhappily ignorant of the goſpel, the fear of God will ſhew itſelf in a ſteady and uniform obedience to that ſenſe, whether moral, or by whatever name it may be diſtinguiſhed, which God hath implanted in the breaſt of man, to tell him what is his duty, and what is not ſo. This is God's voice,

voice, and every one that hath the fear of him will duly attend to it. In Chriſtians it will operate in an invariable adherence to the precepts of the goſpel, and a conſcientious diſcharge of the ſeveral duties enjoined by it.---- "*The fear of the Lord therefore is the be-*"*ginning of wiſdom*," the only rule by which men may guide and conduct themſelves with rectitude and propriety through life.

To conclude with an obſervation applicable to our preſent manners.---Where the complexion of the times ſhall be tinged with refinement and luxury, the general character of the human mind will diſtinguiſh itſelf more by its ſenſibility than its principles; becauſe, in proportion as it is ſoftened by delicate and luxurious impreſſions, its rational and energetic powers will be debilitated and become languid: in ſuch ſtate therefore, and ſuch is our own at this time, there will be a peculiar and immediate neceſſity for inculcating principles of religion.

No ſociety can be happy where there is a want of principle; nor can any principle, not founded

founded in religion, be ſufficient to ſecure the happineſs of ſociety. If therefore men wiſh well either to themſelves or their fellow-creatures, they will endeavour to uphold a due ſenſe of religion, out of regard to this plain and irrefragable truth, " that religious " principles and civil happineſs are eſſentially " and inſeparably connected."

SERMON II.

Of the degrees of Charity due to men of different religious perſuaſions.

Preached before the Britiſh Factory at Leghorn, 1767.*

GALATIANS vi. 10.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſehold of faith.

HOW truly muſt we commiſerate human nature, when we conſider that violation of charity, which has been ſo frequent in the world, on account of religious

 diſtinctions

* THE deſign of this ſermon was to introduce a cuſtom of making a collection at the chapel door of ſuch perſons as did not ſtay to communicate when the ſacrament was adminiſtered, for the benefit of diſtreſſed Britiſh and Iriſh Roman-Catholics. Thoſe paſſages therefore which applied ſolely to that occaſion, have been omitted, as unintereſting to the reader.

diſtinctions and differences of opinion! In feeling and unprejudiced minds it muſt excite a melancholy idea of the weakneſs we are incident to, and of our natural inclination and propenſity to error. Is it to be expected that all men ſhould think alike? that all ſhould be of the ſame opinion, the ſame faith? It is as reaſonable to expect that all ſhould have the ſame features, or be of the ſame complexion. Opportunity, education, connexion, cuſtom, even climate and ſituation, have conſiderable influence in forming and regulating theſe matters. All men have not the ſame means of inſtruction; they are not in the way of receiving the ſame impreſſions: it is not therefore to be expected that they ſhould have the ſame tone of mind, or entirely accord in their ſentiments or ways of thinking. God, we may hope, will make allowance for the errors of mankind in ſuch caſes, and will not demand too ſtrict an account of them, ſeeing they are far from being voluntary or intentional. It cannot become us, frail and imperfect as we are, to ſet up for judges in ſuch caſes; or to lay aſide on this account that benevolence and charity which we owe one another.

SAINT

SAINT Paul, in my text, has given us a full and general rule for our behaviour in this particular. *As we have therefore opportunity,* (ſays he) *let us do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſehold of faith.*---

FIRST, we are obliged, we perceive, to do good unto all men; all, of what creed or denomination ſoever. There is no exception, either on a religious or any other account: all are to partake of our benevolence, and have a claim to our charity and good-will, from being of the ſame order and ſpecies of creatures.

SECONDLY, there ariſes a higher obligation upon us to be ſerviceable to ſuch as are Chriſtians, on account of their farther relation to us, of their being of the ſame religious ſociety or fellowſhip; *eſpecially unto them who are of the houſehold of faith.*" This right does not interfere with, or weaken that prior one; but is new and adventitious, enjoined and declared by the more perfect law of the goſpel.

THIRDLY, there ſeems to follow by induction a ſtill farther right or claim to charity,

from men's being of the ſame particular ſect or communion. This is not expreſsly mentioned indeed, becauſe, at the time of Saint Paul's writing, the Chriſtian world was not ſo unhappily divided as it has been ſince; but it is implied, and may be proved by its reaſonableneſs and neceſſity.

THERE are three diſtinct claims then which men have to the benevolence and charity of each other; as they are connected by different ties or relations, as men, or Chriſtians, or members of the ſame church or communion. In my following diſcourſe I ſhall endeavour to explain the principles upon which theſe claims are founded.

I. THE firſt claim is founded upon the common rights of humanity, upon that univerſal and indelible law which is written on the heart of man.

GOD, when he created us, endowed us with various feelings and affections. The firſt and ſtrongeſt of theſe lead to our own immediate preſervation. Of a ſecondary order, however, are ſeveral that engage and intereſt

intereſt us in the welfare of other people. Never any one, I will venture to affirm, was witneſs to the ſufferings of a fellow-creature, unleſs there was ſome prejudice or ſelf-intereſt in the caſe, without deſiring, nay, without feeling it to be his duty to relieve him, ſuppoſing it in his power. Our heart, our reaſon, our conſcience tells us, that we ought not to ſuffer a fellow-creature to remain miſerable, where we may be able to remedy it. Our concern does not give us time to conſider whether the ſuffering object may be of this or that belief, of this or that church or communion; this has nothing to do with the pleadings of nature. Indeed, were we to know it, it would operate very weakly till we had firſt endeavoured to ſtifle, or ſilence at leaſt their importunity. Nature, or rather the God of nature, ſpeaks loud within us, and will not ſuffer us to be unmoved upon ſuch occaſions, or remain ignorant of our duty in points where the happineſs and ſafety of his creatures are ſo immediately concerned. Did religion make any difference in this reſpect, or exempt us from fulfilling theſe primary, theſe natural duties, ſome ſtamp would have been impreſſed upon the counte-

nances of men to aſcertain what religion they were of; which might ſerve as diſtinguiſhing characters to denote whom we were bound to do good to, and whom not. Since no ſuch characters are to be diſcovered, and our feelings and emotions are ever and invariably the ſame, equally ſtrong and powerful, of what creed or religion ſoever the ſuffering object may be; till we come to inform ourſelves by inquiry that he is of this or that particular one; it is plain that our firſt and principal duty is to endeavour to relieve ſuch unhappy perſon; and that the indifference or inſenſibility which ſometimes follows from ſuch ſecondary conſideration is everſive of the rights of humanity, the effect of error and prejudice, and what we ought to endeavour to overcome as much as poſſible.

RELIGION is that homage or allegiance which is due from the creature to the Creator; but charity is the debt which is due from one creature to another, a debt founded upon immutable and eternal laws decreed by God's wiſdom. To depart therefore from this, where there is ſo plain and irrefragable an obligation, in order to interfere with and intrude

trude into that which does not belong to us, but is altogether dependent between God and his ſubject, this can never be any part of our duty, but muſt be evidently a tranſgreſſion or over-act of it. Who made us arbiters in ſo great and ſublime a cauſe? or whence did we derive our commiſſion? God, without doubt, is able to vindicate his own authority, and certainly, when he thinks proper, will do ſo. We ſhould not preſume to intermeddle with his juriſdiction, but ſhould confine ourſelves to our own ſphere, to the ſtudy and diſcharge of our duty, nor venture to leave a plain and ſafe road for one that is intricate and full of danger. Our Saviour has propoſed to our imitation a perfect example upon this ſubject, in the parable of the good Samaritan: that benevolent and humane perſon, when he ſaw the poor Jew who had fallen among thieves, had immediate compaſſion upon him; *he went to him, and bound up his wounds, and ſet him upon his own beaſt, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.* In how beautiful, how amiable a light, does ſuch humanity appear to us! how irreſiſtibly does it engage our approbation! yet this was the behaviour of a Samaritan towards a Jew, between whom there

there were the greateſt religious differences poſſible; ſo great, that we are told there were even no dealings between them. The good Samaritan, however, did not forget that the Jew, though of a different religious perſuaſion, was yet a man, and that of courſe he had a claim to the offices of humanity. He conſidered him as belonging to the ſame fraternity, or, as it is expreſſed in the goſpel, as his neighbour, and therefore had compaſſion on him. *Go*, ſays our Saviour to his hearer, *and do thou likewiſe*.

THERE are certain claims therefore, we ſee, which all men have upon each other by the common rights or law of nature.----To endeavour to fix the extent of theſe claims, would carry me into too large a field; nor would it be of much uſe, had I time to go about it. Our reaſon in moſt caſes, if we conſult it fairly, will direct us ſufficiently in this particular. We need only diveſt ourſelves of the ideas and diſtinctions of believer and unbeliever, Chriſtian and infidel, and other ſuch ſpecific terms, and repreſent to ourſelves the object before us in his original and natural light as a man and fellow-creature, to be almoſt

almoſt ſure of not being greatly miſtaken in this matter. Perhaps ſuch plain and eaſy way of judging may be leſs liable to error than more ſtudied ones. Something determinate, however, may be laid down upon this point. In general we may affirm, that we ought to do no man an injury upon any account whatſoever, let him be of what religion he will, or even ſo unhappy as to be of no religion: that we ſhould moreover commiſerate the misfortunes of men, and endeavour to relieve them; and, as far as may be conſiſtent with any other relations we ſtand under, with other branches of our duty, that we ſhould alſo be uſeful to them, and ready upon every occaſion to promote their proſperity and happineſs.---Theſe ſeem to be thoſe determinate points in which we are indiſpenſably bound to every one; in which all have a claim upon us, of what creed or denomination ſoever they may be, as men who are entitled to the common rights of humanity.

II. I PROCEED, ſecondly, to examine thoſe farther claims which Chriſtians have upon Chriſtians. Theſe depend upon the particular nature and conſtitution of the Chriſtian church.

THE

THE Church is a ſociety of men drawn together by belief in Jeſus Chriſt, and bound to each other by love and charity. *This is his* (i. e. God's) *commandment*, (ſays Saint John, 1 Epiſt. iii. 23.) *that we ſhould believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and love one another.* Love was one of thoſe eſſential qualifications neceſſary to the formation of this ſociety or fellowſhip.---Now, what ſort of love was this to be? Was it to be nothing more than common ſocial benevolence? This is hardly to be ſuppoſed; becauſe our Saviour ſays, *A* NEW *commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.* And, *By* THIS *ſhall all men know that ye are* MY DISCIPLES, *if ye love one another.* John xiii. 34. 35. Now there would have been no new commandment, nor would men hereby have diſtinguiſhed the diſciples of Chriſt, if there had been nothing extraordinary, nothing particular in the meaning of this injunction; it would have carried no character along with it, nor could it have ſerved as a badge in any reſpect. It is evident therefore that it muſt have meant ſomething of a ſublimer nature, of a more perfect quality.

OUR

Our Saviour himſelf explains to us the force of this ordinance: *This is my commandment*, ſays he, *that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* John xv. 12. The love which we owe one another as Chriſtians is of the ſame ſort as that which our Saviour expreſſed and made manifeſt for us; it is of a much ſuperiour and more perfect quality than common affection or benevolence. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*, ver. 13. But our Saviour's love was greater than this, for he laid down his life for his enemies. He came down from heaven, took upon him our frail and imperfect nature, and, after a wretched life dragged on amidſt ſufferings and diſgrace, offered himſelf a ſacrifice for the ſins of his betrayers. Evangelical righteouſneſs therefore obliges Chriſtians not only to act towards each other with common ſocial benevolence, but to make great ſacrifices, and undergo great inconveniences for one another, whenever their neceſſities may require it; bearing fervent love and charity towards all the members of Chriſt's church, after the example of the Chriſtians of the firſt age, *when the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one ſoul.* And this is enjoined

enjoined them under the encouraging aſſurance, that all good and charitable offices done from this principle, or out of reſpect to the fellowſhip of Chriſt, ſhall be conſidered and accepted by Chriſt as if they were immediately conferred upon himſelf.

When the Son of Man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, ſays our Saviour, *then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory; and before him ſhall be gathered all nations, and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the goats; and he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye cloathed me: I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in priſon, and ye came unto me.*---Then ſhall the righteous anſwer him, ſaying, *Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirſty, and gave thee drink? When ſaw we thee a ſtranger, and took thee in? or naked, and cloathed thee? Or*

when

when ſaw we thee ſick, or in priſon, and came to thee? And the King ſhall anſwer and ſay unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Matt. xxv. 31. *A cup of cold water* even *given to a diſciple, in the name of a diſciple*, or on account of his belonging to Chriſt, *ſhall*, we are told, *in no wiſe loſe its reward.* Matt. x. 42. Mark ix. 41.

SUCH is the nature of that love which we owe to the diſciples of Chriſt, and upon which are founded thoſe claims that one Chriſtian has upon another. Here is no exception, we ſee, on account of diſtinctions of ſects, of differences of opinions, whether concerning polity or ceremonies, or even articles of faith, ſuppoſing them not fundamental, or ſuch, as entirely to annul the eſſence of it. It is ſufficient for a man to believe in Chriſt, and profeſs himſelf his diſciple, to be entitled to it.

III. I COME, in the laſt place, to the conſideration of that further claim which Chriſtians have upon each other by being of the ſame communion. This ſeems to follow rather

rather by induction, and from the reaſonableneſs and neceſſity of the thing, than from any expreſs or poſitive law.

If, as we have ſeen, there is ſo great an obligation upon men to be benevolent and charitable to each other, on account of their believing in the ſame common Redeemer, and being members of the Church univerſal; it ſeems natural to conclude, that members of any particular communion muſt have an additional tie upon each other, by being engaged, according to their own perſuaſion at leaſt, in the ſame common cauſe of truth, and of ſerving God in the way which is moſt acceptable to him.----Any ſeparate ſect of Chriſtians is, in reſpect of the whole Chriſtian church, what a particular family is in regard to a whole nation. In ſuch cloſe and connected ſociety there muſt naturally be ſuppoſed to prevail greater love than between the diſtant branches of a large and diſperſed one. Here every individual has the ſame hopes and fears; they riſe or fall together: if one ſuffers, another is neceſſarily affected thereby. All theſe circumſtances ſtrongly bind and attach men together.----The human heart does

does not ſeem capable of expanding itſelf with an equal degree of warmth towards all mankind. It is confined in its intenſer movements to a limited number. This ſeems to ariſe from the imperfection of our nature, which does not admit of our extending or dilating our powers beyond a certain ſphere.--- In other ſtates beings may be of nobler makes, and endowed with vaſter and more capacious faculties: although to comprehend the whole univerſe within the ſame degree of love, to regard all with an equal eye, may be an attribute perhaps of God only; may belong to infinite perfection. Be this as it may, the nature of the human heart being ſuch as I have deſcribed it, it naturally ought to ſtand affected with greater warmth towards thoſe with whom it is intimately connected, than towards others; and conſequently, Chriſtians of the ſame communion are bound to each other by a ſtronger tie of affection, than thoſe of different communions.---A neceſſity indeed for their being ſo, ariſes in ſome reſpect from the prejudices and illiberal notions of mankind. Theſe prejudices haplefly lead them, contrary to the ſpirit of the principles I have been here

explaining, not only to neglect perſons of different communions, but frequently even to oppreſs and perſecute them. It becomes neceſſary therefore for the members of ſuch communions to unite more cloſely together, not only for their mutual comfort, but to prevent their being martyrs for conſcience ſake.

Upon theſe ſeveral reaſons therefore, there ſeems to be eſtabliſhed a formal right, the third above-mentioned, whereby chriſtians have a particular claim upon each other, by being of the ſame communion. It does not interfere with, or weaken that prior one, which they have as Chriſtians in general, or that original one they have as men; but is ſeparate and diſtinct; not founded indeed upon any poſitive law, but ariſing from accidental conſiderations.

Thus have I endeavoured to explain thoſe principles, upon which are founded the various claims which men have to the benevolence and charity of each other. It is much to be wiſhed that this noble ſubject had been more attended to, and better underſtood: doubtleſs

doubtleſs we ſhould have derived from it very deſireable conſequences; and have heard of greater union and charity than what has, alas! too generally prevailed in the world.

SUPPOSING it were impoſſible for us to extend our beneficence to more than one perſon, and there were ſeveral claimants, all of equal merit in other reſpects, and only ONE of them might be of our own communion: in ſuch caſe, this ONE would have the greateſt right to it; becauſe to thoſe other claims which he would have in common with the reſt, as a man, or a Chriſtian, he would have a ſtill further one on this account. The ſame would hold good between a Chriſtian and an unbeliever.---But, where we are in a ſituation to be ſerviceable to numbers, or where there may be no oppoſition of intereſt like what I have now mentioned, in ſuch caſes we are obliged to do good unto as many as poſſible, unto men of every religion, and every ſect, for the reaſons and principles above explained.

* * *

I MIGHT now properly enough conclude the whole of this diſcourſe with a general recom-

mendation of this amiable virtue; enumerating at the ſame time thoſe ineſtimable bleſſings which are annexed to the performance of it. But I will not extend my diſcourſe to any greater length, perſuading myſelf on the one hand, that your own hearts will ſuggeſt to you the excellency of it more effectually than any thing which I may be able to ſay; and on the other, that you cannot ſtand in need of inſtruction upon a point of ſuch infinite importance to your conſolation and happineſs. Permit me only to obſerve one thing, which is, that charity ſeems to be one of thoſe few particulars wherein we are capable of reſembling our Maker; and that the more general we are in this virtue, the greater likeneſs we muſt bear to him: for he is infinitely good to all his creatures, making his ſun to ſhine upon the wicked, as well as the righteous.

THE viciſſitudes and reverſes of life are very great. They who are in proſperity to-day, may to-morrow be reduced to extreme diſtreſs; God ſuffering ſuch change, frequently, without doubt, to prove our virtue, but ſometimes

ſometimes for a correction of our failings.--- This ſhould be ſufficient of itſelf to excite us to benevolence and charity. I will not dwell, however, upon this point, as it is of too tender a nature. May God preſerve us from ſuch trials; but let us not forget in the mean time, that we are daily expoſed to them.

SERMON III.

A competent, independent, and honourable Maintenance, due to the Miniſters of the Goſpel.

Preached at St. Paul's, before the Stewards of the Sons of the Clergy, May 11, 1775.

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1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.

Do ye not know that they which miniſter about holy things, live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

Even ſo hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the goſpel ſhould live of the goſpel.

THE inſtitution of a miniſtry ſeems ſo neceſſarily connected with the eſtabliſhment of religion, that it may reaſonably be doubted, whether it would be poſſible to effect the one, without previouſly

appointing the other. A diſtinct order of men, firſt, to promulge and propagate religion, and afterwards to preſerve it from neglect and oblivion, ſeems abſolutely neceſſary to its exiſtence and preſervation.

In the arrangement both of the Moſaic and the Chriſtian religions, this appears to have been particularly attended to; and as in the former the family of Aaron and the Levites were diſtinctly ſet apart and conſecrated to this purpoſe, ſo in the latter our bleſſed Saviour ſelected the twelve apoſtles and the ſeventy diſciples to bear teſtimony to his miracles, to be witneſſes of his reſurrection, and to carry the glad tidings of the Goſpel into the remote corners of the earth.

It was a farther object of attention in both theſe diſpenſations to provide for the maintenance and ſupport of this miniſtry: in one, the mode was abſolutely fixed and preſcribed; and in the other, though nothing was expreſsly ſpecified or aſcertained, yet a general claim was declared of all ſuch as preach the goſpel to live of the goſpel.----When our bleſſed

bleſſed Saviour ſent his apoſtles into the world, he gave them this inſtruction, *As ye go,* ſays he, *preach, ſaying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.----Provide neither gold, nor ſilver, nor braſs in your purſes, nor ſcrip for your journey; neither two coats, neither ſhoes, nor yet ſtaves; (for the workman is worthy of his hire) and into whatſoever city or town ye ſhall enter, enquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till you go thence.* Matth. x. The purport of which paſſage is thus illuſtrated by St. Paul in the text, *Do ye not know that they which miniſter about holy things, live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even ſo hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the goſpel ſhould live of the goſpel.*

A CLAIM of ſuch as preach the goſpel to a ſupport and maintenance by means of the goſpel, is founded, we find, upon the moſt ſacred authority: and indeed ſo well has this claim been underſtood, and ſo generally admitted, that there has not yet ſubſiſted that Chriſtian ſociety upon earth which has not made ſome proviſion at leaſt for this purpoſe.

IN

In the apoſtolic and primitive ages, before the goſpel was univerſally received and eſtabliſhed, that community of goods which prevailed afforded ſubſiſtence to every one of the houſehold of faith, whether miniſter or diſciple: no one claimed any property diſtinct from others; but *as many as were poſſeſſors of lands or houſes ſold them, and brought the prices of the things that were ſold, and laid them down at the apoſtles feet; and diſtribution was made unto every man according as he had need.* Acts iv. The cauſe of religion was regarded as alone deſerving of the care and attention of mankind, and was ſuppoſed to ſuperſede and ſet aſide all other conſiderations whatſoever.

But this could be only local and temporary, while the faithful were yet but a few, chiefly of one vicinage; and while danger of perſecution and fervency of zeal kept them *all of one heart and of one ſoul.* Acts iv.

In proportion as Chriſtianity might ſpread and prevail over the powers that oppoſed it, other meaſures would become neceſſary; then it would be expedient to have ſettled and permanent

manent miniſters: for though itinerant ones would be chiefly requiſite to publiſh and diſperſe the knowledge of the goſpel, yet ſuch alone as were ſtationary or reſident could preſerve and perpetuate this knowledge. But this would require ſettled and permanent eſtabliſhments; for as things would, in courſe of time, revert into their ordinary channel, and commerce and negotiations re-commence, the paſſions of mankind would reſume their wonted influence, and ſoon, alas! predominate over zeal for religion. Without fixed and ſpecific eſtabliſhments therefore, the miniſtry would be expoſed to the caprice and humours of men, together with all thoſe inconveniences that muſt neceſſarily ariſe from a precarious and uncertain dependency. This being premiſed, it may not be improper, or indeed foreign to the occaſion of our preſent meeting, to enquire,

FIRST, into the ſpecific nature of that proviſion which ought to be ſet apart and allotted for the miniſtry.

SECONDLY, to examine whether the proviſion made by the laws of this kingdom corre-

correſponds with ſuch ſpecific deſcription, or is adequate to the end propoſed.

THIRDLY, to recommend the encouragement of this charitable inſtitution, from ſuch reaſons as may occur from the forementioned and other occaſional conſiderations. And,

I. FIRST, it ſeems deducible from the nature and intent of the thing, that the proviſion allotted for the ſupport of the miniſtry ſhould be competent, independent, and honourable.---The primary reaſon for eſtabliſhing any proviſion of this nature, and for giving to ſuch eſtabliſhment the ſanction of divine authority, ſeems to be, that the miniſtry may have fewer avocations to take them off from the ſervice they are engaged in, or impede their attending upon, and diſcharging the functions of their office. To miniſter about holy things requires a calm and compoſed frame of mind, thoughts free from perturbation, and detached from, and exonerated of, the cares and concerns of the world. While the mind is under any trouble or diſquietude, it cannot poſſibly riſe to any degree of elevation,

tion, or contemplate the Divine Preſence with that reverence and attention which is due to the dignity of the ſubject. It muſt be fettered and preſſed down by the weight of earthly things, and hindered from aſcending and converſing with heavenly.

FURTHER; it muſt require conſiderable time and application to diſcharge the ordinary functions of the miniſterial office; to comprehend and expound the various duties of religion; to ſolemnize public worſhip; to adminiſter the ſacraments; to attend upon the ſick; to comfort the deſponding; and to move and convert the impenitent and unbelieving ſinner: theſe, with other neceſſary parts of the ſacred office, if they are rightly and duly performed, are works of great labour and application. Any one conſcientiouſly applying himſelf to a ſtrict and faithful diſcharge of his duty in theſe particulars, can have little or no leiſure to attend to any thing elſe: he will be excluded from all other buſineſs, and incapacitated for procuring for himſelf the common neceſſaries and comforts of life. Indeed the turn of his profeſſion will in ſome reſpect

reſpect diſqualify him for exerciſing or following to advantage any other.----Nothing therefore can be more obvious or more reaſonable, than that a competent proviſion ſhould be made for him, in order that he may be enabled to apply with greater diligence to the ſacred duties of his calling. Every one, by the law of nature, has a right to a common ſubſiſtence with the reſt of God's creatures: it will not admit of a doubt then, whether ſuch as forego the uſual means of providing it themſelves for the ſake of the community, have a right to be furniſhed with it at the common expence. (*Blackſtone*, vol. ii. p. 25.)---A competent proviſion is undoubtedly their right, both by natural and divine appointment; *i. e.* ſuch a proviſion (for by *competent* this muſt neceſſarily be underſtood) as may ſuffice to procure the neceſſaries and moderate enjoyments of life, not only for themſelves, but their families: for if the reaſon or principle wherein their claim to a maintenance originates, is, that they may enjoy leiſure and tranquillity, and have fewer avocations to draw them off from the duties of their profeſſion; this reaſon muſt doubtleſs

doubtleſs extend to their families and offſpring: for he muſt be leſs or more than man, whoſe mind can preſerve its tranquillity, while ſuch are expoſed to the riſque of being deſtitute, and left a prey to temptation, and want, and miſery.----The truth of this obſervation is in itſelf ſo obvious, that the Court of Rome, in order to cover, and at the ſame time carry on her deſign of exalting the hierarchy, by rendering the miniſtry more devoted to and dependent upon herſelf, alledged this as a plea for impoſing upon the miniſtry celibacy; pretending that conjugal and paternal affection ſo entirely engaged the mind, as to alienate it from God and religion. But the argument was fallacious and inconcluſive: for although it be moſt true that ſuch tender connexions deeply intereſt and engage the heart, yet it by no means follows that religion is injured, or the regard and attention that is due to her diminiſhed thereby.

RELIGION ſeems to be intimately connected with the affections: the more the ſocial ones are cultivated, the purer will religion, for the moſt part, flow. If you extinguiſh

tinguiſh the tender feelings of the heart, religion will degenerate into ſuperſtition: if you leave them to operate, without allowing them their proper objects, they will probably indeed cleave to religion, but they will ſoon enflame it with all the intemperate zeal and ardour of enthuſiaſm.---The moſt likely method to preſerve religion pure and untainted, is to leave the affections, under the guidance of reaſon and a ſenſe of duty, to purſue their natural courſe, and adhere to ſuch objects as the all-wiſe Diſpoſer of nature intended and aſſigned them.----But to return to the ſubject.

INDEPENDENCY is another property or characteriſtic that ſhould diſtinguiſh the proviſion to be allotted and ſet apart for the miniſtry. Dependence and ſervility are almoſt inſeparable ideas: nothing therefore could be more diſgraceful to the miniſtry, or, in its conſequences, more hurtful to religion, than that they ſhould be ſubordinate to ſuch an illiberal and humiliating condition.

MEN ſeldom reſpect thoſe who are dependent upon them; and as by a wrong, though uſual,

uſual, connexion of ideas, the merits of a cauſe are ſuppoſed to bear ſome relation to the merits of ſuch as ſupport it; if the miniſtry were to be in a ſervile ſtate of dependence, not only they, but even religion itſelf, would fall into contempt, and be treated with diſdain and contumely. Mutual truſt and reliance on each other for offices of affection and good-will, ought indeed to prevail as much as poſſible, in order to cement that union which ſhould ever ſubſiſt between the miniſtry and the people. As few diſtinctions as poſſible alſo ſhould be allowed to take place and ſeparate them. As Chriſtians, as men, and as ſubjects of the ſtate, they are exactly under the ſame obligations; they ought therefore to be amenable to the ſame laws and juriſdiction. Hence it appears that nothing could be more unwarrantable (however refined it might be deemed as a ſtroke of policy, or an artifice to gain power) than the deſign of the Court of Rome in exempting the miniſtry from the civil power; for this was to place them in ſuch a ſituation as could not fail, except in dark and ignorant ages, of expoſing them to envy and diſlike.

In matters ſolely relative to their profeſſion or official character, as far as may be conſiſtent with the welfare of the ſtate, it ſeems reaſonable that they ſhould be ſubject to the authorities ordained to take cognizance of ſuch matters; but in all others they ſhould be ſubordinate to the ſame juridical powers as other men; and the diſcriminating characteriſtics between them and the laity ſhould be as few and as ſimple as poſſible, and loſt, as it were, in that common and incluſive one, viz. their being brethren and fellow members of the Church of Chriſt.

The laſt diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of the proviſion to be ſet apart and allotted for the miniſtry, is, that it be honourable, and not ſullied with any baſe or ſordid quality.

It is an undeniable truth, that our opinions of men are greatly influenced by certain circumſtances or appendages belonging to them. It is even with difficulty that we diſtinguiſh between perſonal or internal characters, and external appearances. Manner of life, means of ſubſiſtence, and various other circumſtances, determine

determine our opinions of thoſe who adopt them. If therefore it is of importance to religion that the miniſtry be reſpected, it is certainly of importance that the proviſion allotted for the ſupport of this miniſtry be of the moſt honourable nature. The mind has more than a common diſlike, it has an extreme averſion to every thing mean and ſordid in regard to this article.---If therefore it be either burthenſome or oppreſſive to individuals---if it ariſe from any illiberal mode or aſſignment---if it be in any reſpect diſhonourable or ſordid, it cannot fail of reflecting diſgraceful and invidious aſperſions upon the miniſtry, and of gradually bringing both them, and the ſacred cauſe they are engaged in, into diſrepute.

HAVING thus endeavoured to ſhew what the nature of the proviſion to be ſet apart and allotted for the miniſtry ought to be, allow me to examine, in the

II. SECOND place, Whether that which is eſtabliſhed by the laws of this kingdom for ſuch purpoſe, correſponds with the charac-

teriſtics here pointed out.----And in ſeveral reſpects, I think, candour muſt allow that it does not.

The allotment of tythes ſeems to have been the moſt perfect and unexceptionable mode of providing for the miniſtry that could poſſibly have been deviſed under the Jewiſh government; but it will admit of ſome doubt, I think, whether it be the ſame under the Goſpel. Different circumſtances require different meaſures; and nothing can be more different than the circumſtances of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian ſtates. Tythes, under the former, were undeniably of divine appointment; but, though under the latter the miniſtry have both a natural and divine right to a competent, independent, and honourable maintenance, yet the mode of this maintenance does not appear, as far as I am able to collect at leaſt, to have been preſcribed.

The ſeveral paſſages relative to tythes in the New Teſtament apparently refer to the Jewiſh law, at that time ſtill in force.--- Tythes are, without diſpute, liable to many objections:

objections: and, perhaps, a more ſolid and permanent advantage has not ariſen to this country from the preſent mode of incloſing, than that of allotting lands in lieu of them.--- Small tythes in particular are productive of innumerable inconveniencies; they expoſe the miniſtry to infinite trouble and vexation, are the occaſion of perpetual ſtrife and litigation, and are ſeldom, if ever, collected, without the envy and ill-will of thoſe who pay them.*--- The ſame may be ſaid, with equal truth and propriety, of offerings; which, if farther conſidered as a gift or contribution, have the additional inconvcnience of rendering the miniſtry proportionably ſervile and dependent.

* Although the author, in order to recommend the charity, has here taken notice of ſome inconveniences ariſing from tythes, and the preſent mode of providing for the clergy; yet he is ſenſible that no other mode, except an equitable allotment of lands, could be ſubſtituted in their ſtead, without ſubjecting the clergy to yet greater inconveniences. Any pecuniary alternative or compoſition, in whatever manner ſtated or aſcertained, could not fail of being, not only injurious, but, I think, even ruinous, to them.

But it is not ſo much of the mode as of the inſufficiency of this proviſion, that there is ſuch abundant reaſon to complain.

The benefices of this kingdom are by no means equal to the occaſion for which they were deſigned. The larger and more conſiderable ones are in general leſs profitable than they are repreſented to be, and fall conſiderably ſhort of their nominal value. The ſmaller livings are wholly incompetent, and do not ſuffice to defray the common expences of a family, regulated with the moſt frugal œconomy. The diſtreſſes of the inferior clergy, in the more diſtant provinces eſpecially, are, without exaggeration, truly great. They are excluded from all ſecular employments; from all other means, in fact, of procuring a ſubſiſtence; and are expected to ſupport a character, and to maintain themſelves, and perhaps a numerous progeny, with a ſalary of fifty or ſixty pounds a year; a leſs ſum than is frequently gained by the manual labour of an ordinary artiſt or mechanic. Is it poſſible that they ſhould live with any eaſe, or keep up the leaſt dignity, with ſo ſmall a pittance? They are expoſed to every evil,

evil, which a ſenſible mind can be affected with, on one hand; and on another, to what indeed a conſcious ſenſe of their own innocence, and of the injury offered them, will help to render them ſuperior to, viz. contempt and indignity. Where the clergy are able to ſupport a reſpectable character under ſuch diſadvantageous circumſtances, it muſt argue a conſiderable degree of merit, and reflect upon them proportional honour.

An additional diſadvantage attending this order of the clergy, is, that they ſeldom come into poſſeſſion of the little which is allotted them, till they are conſiderably advanced in life; whence it happens, that they ſeldom are enabled to marry ſo early as other men, and of courſe more ſeldom live to effect the education or eſtabliſhment of their children. They are therefore not only under the neceſſity of ſtruggling with perpetual difficulties to ſupport and keep their offspring from want during their lives, but of anticipating, with inexpreſſible anguiſh of mind, the many evils and calamities they muſt neceſſarily be expoſed to after their deceaſe.----A ſituation

more truly diſtreſsful, or more deſerving of compaſſion, can ſcarcely be imagined.

THE deſign of the preſent inſtitution being to remove, or in ſome degree mitigate at leaſt this peculiar diſtreſs, by raiſing a fund to apprentice to honeſt and reputable trades the children of ſuch clergymen as may be more eminently in like indigent circumſtances; allow me, in the

III. LAST place, to recommend it to your protection and encouragement, from ſuch reaſons as may occur from the forementioned and other occaſional conſiderations. And if *they who preach the goſpel have a right to live of the goſpel*, they ſeem, without diſpute, to have a right, where the laws of the community have not made a ſufficient proviſion for this purpoſe, to the aid and aſſiſtance of every individual Chriſtian, of every one benefited by the goſpel. No true believer, no one admitting the goſpel in its full latitude and extent, can, I think, refuſe his aſſent to this propoſition. I know indeed, that in ages of ſuperſtition and bigotry, the claims and pretenſions

tenſions of the clergy are frequently ſtretched and extended beyond their juſt and proper limits: in thoſe of infidelity and irreligion, on the other hand, they are proportionably contracted and abridged: but there is an intermediate one, where both reaſon and religion muſt concur in acknowledging their legal boundaries: theſe boundaries, to me at leaſt, ſeem to extend to the point which I have here marked out. The clergy appear to have a claim, founded even in juſtice, to the benevolence and contribution of Chriſtians in all their unavoidable wants and diſtreſſes:---they have an additional and yet more powerful one founded in charity.

THE world has not received, in any inſtance, greater advantage from the goſpel, than in the improvement and perfection which it has given to morality.---The injunction of charity ſeems to have ſupplied every defect that could poſſibly be imputed to the moral law.---By this we are taught to be kindly intentioned and beneficent to each other, not only as being fellow creatures, but fellow Chriſtians. Regard to the communion of Chriſt is, by divine appointment,

appointment, to animate and quicken our affections to reciprocal love and good offices. Did Chriſt, moved by our diſtreſſes, deſcend from the throne of light, take upon him our nature, and bear our ſins and infirmities upon the croſs?----He hath ſtrictly charged and commanded us, as he has thus loved us, that we alſo love one another.---*Hereby perceive we the love of God*, ſays St. John, 1 Epiſt. iii. 16. *becauſe he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.---But whoſo hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*---Our love of God and of Chriſt is here eſtimated and meaſured by the love which we bear to the members of Chriſt's church.---Indeed our bleſſed Saviour himſelf hath moſt graciouſly aſſured us, that whatever good or charitable action we may perform to any of his diſciples out of faith and regard to his holy communion, ſhall be accepted by him as if it were immediately conferred upon himſelf.---*Inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren*, ſays he, *ye have done it unto me*. Matth. xxv. 40.

SEEING

SEEING therefore that the obligation to diſtribute to the neceſſities of the faithful in Chriſt is in general ſo ſacred and inviolable, we cannot but admit it in a fuller and more enlarged ſignification, when particularly applied to the miniſters and diſpenſers of Chriſt's holy word and ſacraments. Theſe are more peculiarly his ſervants, as being more immediately conſecrated and devoted to the cauſe of his religion; they ſeem therefore to have a peculiar claim to the charity of Chriſtians in all their diſtreſſes and misfortunes. *He that receiveth you*, ſaid our bleſſed Saviour to thoſe whom he ſent to preach the goſpel, *receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, ſhall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, ſhall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a diſciple, verily I ſay unto you, he ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward.* Matth. x. 41.---There ſeems to be a gradation in the ſeveral claims of mankind to offices of charity, proportionate to their reſpective relation and importance to the Chriſtian cauſe.

HERE

HERE then I ſhall cloſe my diſcourſe, hoping that it cannot be neceſſary to ſpend more time in endeavouring to move your hearts to favour this pious and laudable inſtitution. I might indeed diſplay to you the miſeries of age overburthened with care and infirmities: I might paint to you the innocence of youth, with all the ſnares to which it is expoſed; and implore your compaſſion of the one, and protection of the other. But I will not intrude upon your time with ſuch trite declamation: I will not apply to your paſſions, but appeal to your underſtandings, to your reaſon, to your faith. Theſe will all concur in recommending to you this excellent charity.---Allow me only, in taking leave of you, to remind you of one truth: you are but ſtewards of the wealth which God has committed to you. The talent which is now entruſted to you, you muſt ſoon (how ſoon, alas! God only knows) give an account of. *He has appointed you to be rulers over his houſehold, to give them their portion of meat in due ſeaſon.* Conſider then, oh! conſider, how much it importeth you, *that your Lord, when he cometh, may find you ſo doing.* Matt. xxiv. 45. 46.

SER-

SERMON IV.

Of the Nature of Subſcription to Articles of Religion.

Preached before the Reverend JOHN LAW, A. M. Archdeacon of Rocheſter, at his Viſitation held at Bromley, June 7, 1774.

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1 THESS. v. 21.

Prove all things: hold faſt that which is good.

REASON being a diſtinctive faculty of man, the exerciſe and uſe of it muſt neceſſarily be one of the nobleſt employments of our nature:---and by parity of argument, as the various ſubjects, to which reaſon is applicable, are not equally intereſting and important, each muſt be entitled to ſuch ſhare of our regard and conſideration,

as

as may be proportionate to its intrinſic merit and excellence:---religion, therefore, by being in its nature the moſt ſublime, and in its conſequences the moſt extenſive and important of all ſubjects, muſt have a preferable claim to the firſt and chief place in all our rational inveſtigations and inquiries.

THIS poſition, in general, is ſufficiently clear, and will, I preſume, without much heſitation, be aſſented to: but in the analyſis and further explication of it, a ſeries of queſtions will ariſe and offer themſelves; of which it will not be eaſy to aſcertain the limits, or propoſe ſatisfactory ſolutions.

AMONGST others, it will naturally be aſked,

FIRST; How far we are to be guided by reaſon in our choice and profeſſion of religion, or in holding communion with any particular church or religious ſociety?

SECONDLY; Whether, ſuppoſing no particular church to be abſolutely perfect or free from

from error, we may nevertheleſs be acquitted of all obligation to hold communion with any?

THIRDLY; Whether aſſent or ſubſcription to the doctrine or articles of any particular church can be ſuppoſed to imply ſuch implicit belief, as to render it incumbent upon us, either in the firſt inſtance to refuſe our aſſent, or afterwards to retract or diſavow it, ſuppoſing we may have objections to ſome partial doctrines in that church; though, upon the whole, we may generally approve of them, and think them leſs exceptionable than the doctrines or articles of any other church?

THESE queſtions, as they are of infinite importance, cannot but intereſt every ſerious and thinking perſon: and, I hope, I ſhall need no apology, if I venture to propoſe a few general conjectures, which may poſſibly ſerve in ſome meaſure to elucidate them.

I. AND, firſt; nothing can be more undeniable, I ſhould ſuppoſe, than that we ought, as in all other things, ſo in our choice and

and profeſſion of religion, to be ſolely guided and determined by reaſon.

REASON, if we may argue from final cauſes, was given us by God to direct us in our ſearch and purſuit after happineſs: it is the compaſs by which we are to ſteer through a rough and tempeſtuous world, and without which we cannot hope to reach the haven we are bound to.---If ſuch be the uſe and deſign of reaſon, how can it be applied more properly, or exerciſed to fitter purpoſe, than in guiding us in our religious reſearches?

RELIGION is the higheſt concern of our nature, that which our ſupreme happineſs and welfare depend upon: is it not then folly to ſuppoſe, that in matters of leſs moment we are to be directed by reaſon; and in this, which is of ſuch infinite concern, may riſk our ſafety without it?

SUPERSTITION indeed endeavours to terrify us from exploring and prying into the myſteries of religion, by repreſenting them ſo awful and ſacred, as to make it impious for man to dare to lift up his eyes and look upon them.

ENTHUSIASM,

ENTHUSIASM, on the other hand, profeſſes to communicate an inward light, more infallible, and to be depended upon, even than reaſon.

BUT if we liſten to either of theſe, we ſhall be miſerably deluded. Superſtition is indiſſolubly connected with folly; enthuſiaſm with madneſs: and the common reſult of both is intemperate zeal, intolerant perſecution, and violation of charity.

REASON only, properly and carefully attended to, can ſecure us from error and its contingent evils.—Far am I from meaning by this aſſertion, that we are abſolutely to reject whatever does not fall under the immediate notice and cognizance of reaſon; becauſe there are truths, which reaſon alone might poſſibly never be able to diſcover. Superior intelligence may, upon due and becoming occaſion, communicate to us ſupernatural verities; but reaſon muſt judge of the truth of ſuch revelation, by bringing it to ſome teſt or criterion; and conſequently remain the ſupreme arbiter in this matter. To her deciſions there-

fore we muſt ultimately be amenable, and ſubmit.

WHILE we are in infancy or the dawn of life, the tenderneſs and ſolicitude of our parents piouſly lead them to inculcate into our minds ſuch religious principles as they theirſelves think true and conducive to eternal happineſs: and the utmoſt deference and reſpect is undoubtedly due to their judgment and authority; it being the beſt, if not ſole, criterion of truth, in the poſſeſſion of this weak and injudicious age. Nevertheleſs, when reaſon aſſumes her empire, and removes us from a ſtate of pupilage, we are indiſpenſably obliged to examine theſe principles, and to retain or reject them, as they appear right or otherwiſe: we are then, according to the apoſtle's doctrine, *to prove all things, and hold faſt that which is good*; we are to make choice of that religion which is ſeemingly pure and perfect, and to hold communion with thoſe perſons who profeſs and practiſe it in the pureſt and moſt perfect manner; otherwiſe we prefer darkneſs to light, and are undeniably guilty of ſin, inaſmuch as we do

do not hold faſt, but reject, that which is good, and retain that which is evil.

THIS cannot, I think, be controverted, without denying us the uſe of our underſtanding, and the privilege of common ſenſe and common judgment.

II. THE ſecond queſtion;—Whether, ſuppoſing no particular church to be abſolutely perfect or free from error, we may nevertheleſs be acquitted of all obligation to hold communion with any;" will not admit, I fear, of ſo eaſy or ſatisfactory a ſolution.

To aſſert that we are to aſſociate and hold communion with perſons openly profeſſing and practiſing error in ſo important a buſineſs as religion, ſeems at firſt ſight a ſoleciſm of a ſtrange and incoherent nature, and altogether irreconcileable with the doctrine inculcated in the text of *proving all things, and holding faſt that which is good.* Nevertheleſs, under certain reſtrictions and limitations, it is, I think, true.

LET us attend to this ſubject with candour and impartiality.

RELIGION is the tie which unites all intelligent natures to the Divinity; the power by which he attracts them to himſelf, and forms and retains them all within one vaſt comprehenſive ſyſtem. As charity is the link that binds men to each other, ſo religion is the chain that draws them all to God. But religion thus deſcribed implies communion or fellowſhip; becauſe it eſtabliſhes certain relations, from whence ariſe various obligations and duties, which cannot be diſcharged, if we ſequeſter ourſelves from, and refuſe to hold communion with, each other.

RELIGION itſelf, indeed, could not ſubſiſt without the intercourſe and communion of mankind.

LET us conſider religion, firſt, in a ſpeculative light, or as a ſyſtem of truths neceſſary to inform and improve the mind. What would be the fate of it, were it left in the ſtate we are here ſuppoſing? the natural bias of

of the mind, if deprived of ſociety and communion, is to ignorance and barbariſm; the common operation of thoſe principles which are inherent in our nature, inclines it to theſe evils: place religion then in a ſequeſtered and ſolitary ſtate, and it will either be ſuperſeded by atheiſm, or degenerate into bigotry or fanaticiſm.

EVEN natural religion, without the intercourſe and communion of men, could not poſſibly preſerve itſelf in the human mind.

THIS will appear very evident to thoſe who have made obſervations upon the manners and cuſtoms of ſavage nations, who may be ſaid to live rather in a ſtate of ſolitude than of ſociety; for here, though you may diſcern ſome veſtiges of thoſe fair and beautiful characters which the Creator originally impreſſed upon the mind, yet do they appear ſo faint, as ſcarcely to be legible.

IF then natural religion is ſo little able to ſupport itſelf, much leſs can revealed religion be ſuppoſed equal to this great and arduous

taſk; for this, by containing many things ſupernatural---above, or, I may rather ſay, foreign to reaſon, muſt neceſſarily require ſuperior aſſiſtance to preſerve and keep it alive in the human mind.

We may flatter ourſelves, if we pleaſe, with ideas of our own ſufficiency, of the ſtrength and power of our mental faculties, and that we ſhould be in no danger of loſing our religious notions and principles, were we to live ſequeſtered from the reſt of mankind; yet experience plainly ſhews that we deceive ourſelves, and that, under ſuch unfavourable circumſtances, we ſhould gradually degenerate, and at length become totally ignorant and wretched.---Religion could not poſſibly preſerve itſelf in the mind under ſuch diſadvantages.

But, ſecondly, religion is to be conſidered, not only as a ſyſtem of ſpeculative truths, tending to improve and perfect the mind; but as a collection of rules likewiſe, requiring and enforcing various performances and acts of

of obedience.* The obſervance of particular rites and ſolemnities; the participation of ſacraments, inſtituted not only for the inſtruction

* RELIGION, derived from the verb *religare*, implies the whole of man's *duty* or obligation to God; and is "the tie which unites all intelligent natures to the "Divinity."

THIS *duty*, when analyſed into its component parts, conſiſts in entertaining juſt notions of the Deity, and in performing ſuch acts as may be agreeable to his will; and thus religion, by a known form of ſpeech, may be ſaid to be "a ſyſtem of truths," and "a collection "of rules," &c. becauſe our entertaining right notions of theſe truths, and duly obſerving and obeying theſe rules, do actually conſtitute the whole of our religious duty.

RELIGION cannot, I think, be conſidered as "a per-"ſonal thing, conſiſting in a certain temper of mind, "which influences our practice;" (ſee Monthly Review, vol. lii. p. 74.) becauſe it then could not be a ſubject either of reaſon or revelation, which it undeniably is.—Right notions of the Deity, acquired either by reaſon or revelation, will indeed naturally excite a peculiar temper or affection of mind, not improperly called Piety, which will urge us to the obſervance of thoſe acts above mentioned, pointed out alſo by reaſon or revelation, and will be further expreſſed, aſſiſted, and improved by an attendance thereupon: but this temper is itſelf not religion, but rather, I apprehend, an effect of it, partially conſidered, upon the mind.

and improvement, but for the comfort of the mind; theſe are actual parts of religion, and cannot take place but in collective ſocieties of men holding communion with each other.

RELIGION therefore thus requiring an union or aſſociation of men to its very exiſtence and preſervation, the queſtion propoſed may be brought into a narrow compaſs, and the whole will be reducible to this alternative, either to ſuffer religion to wear away, and in time be intirely loſt to the world; or to hold and profeſs it in communion with each other, even though we may not be able to do it, but under the diſadvantage ſuppoſed of there being no particular church abſolutely perfect or free from error; a ſuppoſition neceſſarily to be made from the frailty and imperfection of human nature, and all ſublunary inſtitutions. Which of theſe conditions we ought to fix upon, I think no one can be at a loſs to determine: for ſurely it would argue perverſeneſs to reject and throw religion aſide entirely, becauſe we cannot poſſeſs it in perfection equal to our deſires; to deny ourſelves all the comforts and advantages to be derived from this ſource of bliſs, for no

no other reaſon than that we cannot enjoy them without alloy.

THERE is no contradiction indeed in the aſſertion, that errors may be of ſuch a nature as to preclude or outweigh even all the advantages of religion; and ſuch, we have reaſon to fear, do prevail in particular churches. But it is inconſiſtent with all preſumptive belief, and not leſs ſo with that which is founded upon the promiſes of the goſpel, to ſuppoſe that the providence of God would ſuffer ſuch errors to prevail univerſally: his tender love and regard for his church would doubtleſs lead him to prevent ſo grievous and intolerable an evil.

I THINK then, upon the whole, it may ſafely be concluded, that, even ſuppoſing no particular church to be abſolutely perfect or free from error, we nevertheleſs cannot be acquitted of all obligation to hold communion with ſome one; namely, with ſuch as may appear to us moſt perfect, in order that we may be able to retain the fundamental truths of religion, and practiſe its eſſential duties.

III. THE

III. The third queſtion, "Whether aſſent "or ſubſcription to the doctrine or articles of "any particular church, can be ſuppoſed to "imply ſuch implicit belief, as to render it "incumbent upon us, either in the firſt in-"ſtance to refuſe our aſſent, or afterwards to "retract or diſavow it, ſuppoſing we may "have objections to ſome partial doctrines in "that church, though, upon the whole, we "may generally approve of them, and think "them leſs exceptionable than the doctrines "or articles of any other church," remains ſtill to be conſidered.

In diſcuſſing this point, it will be neceſſary to have a retroſpect to what has been already advanced.

Necessity of communion induces with it neceſſity of inſtitutions and formularies of faith and religious worſhip. No aſſociation can ſubſiſt without preſcribed rules to conduct and govern itſelf by; thoſe of religion apparently leſs than any other, by reaſon of that heat and fervour with which religion is apt to warm and agitate men's minds. Without rules

rules and inſtitutions, diſorder and confuſion would not fail to introduce themſelves, and in time diſunite and diſſolve the communion. The tenour of theſe inſtitutions indeed muſt coaleſce with the deſign of the aſſociation which they are meant to ſupport and regulate. In the preſent inſtance therefore they muſt ſerve, not merely to preſerve union, but truth and uniformity likewiſe in the knowledge and belief of all the eſſential articles of religion, and the performance of its practical duties. They muſt be conſidered both as articles of union, and of faith and religious worſhip.

THIS being premiſed, it is evident that ſubſcription or aſſent to theſe articles, in whatever manner or form of words it may be expreſſed, does imply not only approbation and a readineſs to comply with and obſerve the ritual and diſciplinary acts which are appointed by them, but general belief likewiſe of the doctrines they ſet forth. It ſuppoſes that we have examined the different churches or religious communions that have fallen under our notice; and that we give this, which is diſcriminated by theſe articles, the preference: that

that we believe it to contain no eſſential or fundamental error, though it may not be altogether free from error; and that, having *proved all things, we have choſen that which is good,* namely, that communion which to us appears moſt perfect, both in regard to its doctrinal and ritual inſtitutions. But it cannot imply ſuch implicit belief, as to render it incumbent upon us, either to refuſe or to retract our aſſent in the caſe, and under the circumſtances ſuppoſed; not only for this reaſon, that ſuch condition would neceſſarily ſeclude us from holding communion with any church, contrary to that obligation which I have endeavoured, under the ſecond article of this diſcourſe, to aſcertain; but likewiſe for others, which I ſhall here ſubjoin and enumerate.

First; No inſtitution or formulary of this nature can be ſuppoſed to be unerring or infallible. From whatever ſource or principle ſuch inſtitutions may be derived, they muſt ſtill be derived by human agency; but whatever is wrought or effected by human agency, is ſubject to fallibility. It is inconſiſtent with all

all rational belief, and expreſsly repugnant to the principles of Proteſtantiſm, to ſuppoſe any infallible power upon earth. Let articles or formularies of faith be deduced even from ſcripture; yet, as it is poſſible from the uncertainty of language, from variety of readings, from corruptions of the text, for men to miſunderſtand and miſinterpret ſcripture, the argument will hold in its full force. Aſſent or ſubſcription therefore to ſuch conſtitutions can only be conditional and excepting error.

We are told in the twentieth article of our eſtabliſhed religion, that "it is not lawful "for the church to ordain any thing that is "contrary to God's written word---nor, be-"ſides the ſame, enforce any thing to be "believed for neceſſity of ſalvation."

If this is not lawful for the church to ordain or enforce, neither may ſhe require aſſent, but on condition that ſhe neither does ordain nor enforce ſuch illegal inſtitutions. A poſſibility of error is here ſuppoſed; and therefore aſſent or ſubſcription to her articles muſt

muſt virtually be, not implicit, but conditional, in caſe no ſuch error be committed as is here alluded to.

SECONDLY; Man's judgment is variable, liable to be affected by innumerable incidents, independent of himſelf, and entirely out of his own power; the requiſition therefore of implicit belief, or of open renunciation, would be really abſurd, productive in its conſequences of confuſion, and finally fruſtrative of the end and deſign of the articles or inſtitutions requiring ſuch belief.

HUMAN judgment is fluctuating and inconſtant, ſucceſſively progreſſive, ſtationary, and retrograde. There is a certain point, when it arrives at maturity and perfection; but nothing is more difficult than to aſcertain this point, and determine it preciſely. By culture and exerciſe our faculties improve and ſtrengthen; as our ideas multiply, our knowledge increaſes; but after a certain period, our mental powers decay, our ſenſes fail us, and, alas! (melancholy reflection!) we revert to a ſtate of childhood.---Each of theſe ſtages or periods is commonly

monly characteriſed by peculiar ſentiments and modes of thinking. Uniformity or ſameneſs of opinion through all of them is ſcarcely to be met with in the hiſtory of the human mind.

AGAIN, human judgment, beſides this its natural changeableneſs, is liable to be affected by innumerable incidental cauſes. Health and ſickneſs, proſperity and adverſity, climate and weather, produce alterations, by no means inconſiderable, upon our diſpoſitions and modes of thinking. Not only hope and deſpondency, reſolution and fear, but even belief and doubt, are in ſome degree connected with phyſical cauſes, as well as moral ones.

THE ſubject indeed is intricate, perhaps beyond our power to unravel; but the fact is certain. As an event will at one time throw the mind into violent agitation, and at another paſs almoſt unnoticed; ſo the ſame propoſition will, under different circumſtances, make different impreſſions upon us. Such a variety of cauſes therefore concurring to make uniformity or ſameneſs of opinion in any man almoſt

almoſt impoſſible, would it not be abſurd to require ſuch implicit belief as neceſſarily ſuppoſes ſuch uniformity?

FURTHER; the exaction of this term would fruſtrate its own intent, by introducing confuſion, and diſſolving that very communion which it meant to eſtabliſh.

NOTHING can be more evident and leſs controvertible than this aſſertion; for if men were reduced to the rigid alternative, either of ſubſcribing to the articles of any religious communion with implicit faith and approbation, or of openly renouncing that communion, there would not be a poſſibility of maintaining any communion upon earth; becauſe no communion ever was, or probably ever will be, for the reaſons already aſſigned, abſolutely perfect or free from error. In ſuch caſe therefore, every religious communion would be thrown into diſorder, its ties of union be diſſolved, and religion itſelf be abandoned, and unhappily periſh.

NOTHING more then can be implied by aſſent and ſubſcription to articles, I conclude, than

than general belief of, and acquieſcence in them; a firm perſuaſion that they contain nothing eſſentially or fundamentally wrong; and an undiſſembled and ſincere preference of them to the articles of any other church or communion.

THAT nothing more can be virtually implied, is, I think, very evident; that nothing more really is ſo, hiſtorical teſtimony, and the general proceedings of eccleſiaſtical aſſemblies, will furniſh a preſumptive argument.

No religious conſiſtory ever met, I believe, from the earlieſt council to the lateſt ſynod, without conſiderable debate upon every propoſition advanced for the regulation of either faith or worſhip. If then thoſe who impugned the articles propoſed and finally agreed upon by the major part of the aſſembly, did neither generally ſeparate, nor were excluded from the reſt on account of ſuch oppoſition, but, upon their acquieſcence and conformity, did, and were allowed to continue members of the communion, it is plain that implicit approbation and belief was not expected.

To aſſert that every member of ſuch aſſembly might, during the courſe of the debate, be convinced, either by force of argument, or the illumination of God's Spirit, ſo that an actual uniformity of ſentiment did finally prevail throughout the whole, is a poſition proper to be maintained by that church which pretends to infallibility; but by Proteſtants it never can be maintained, becauſe it is irreconcileable with hiſtory, and all credible and authentic teſtimony.

Lastly, In final confirmation of this aſſertion, I add, that the proclamation prefixed to the articles by royal authority, expreſsly taking notice, that "though ſome "differences had been ill raiſed, yet the clergy "had always moſt willingly ſubſcribed to the "articles eſtabliſhed, ſhewing that they did "not intend to deſert them;" with the ſubſequent injunction, "that all further curious "ſearch be laid aſide, and diſputes ſhut up "in God's promiſes, as they be generally ſet "forth in the holy Scriptures; and the gene-"ral meaning of the articles of the Church "of England according to them:" this, though

though it ſuppoſes an agreement in eſſential doctrines, plainly gives a latitude to men's opinions in regard to points chiefly curious, and not eſſential; and ſatisfactorily evinces, that implicit and abſolute belief was neither required nor expected.

HERE then I ſhall reſt my diſcourſe; and having brought it to this concluſion, I will not intrude any longer upon your time, than juſt to mention my reaſons for introducing and ſubmitting this ſubject to your conſideration.

THE preſent diſſenſions amongſt us concerning the Articles, require, I think, a different mode of conduct from what has been yet adopted, if we ſeriouſly wiſh to adjuſt and accommodate them. Union and uniformity in religion are undoubtedly moſt deſireable and neceſſary; becauſe nothing can be more diſtreſſing to men's minds, or more prejudicial to the intereſts of religion, than diſputes and variations: ſincere and pious Chriſtians therefore muſt earneſtly deſire the accompliſhment of this great and good work. But how is it

to be effected without mutual conceſſions? without indulgence and toleration on one ſide, and compliance and conformity on the other?

No formulary of faith or religious worſhip ever was, or probably ever will be, perfect. That of the Church of England is, I ſincerely believe, the moſt perfect of any at this time upon the face of the earth; but to aſſert that it is not entirely ſo, is, ſurely, no impeachment of its excellence or ſuperiority.---What is to be done then?---Shall we forever be propoſing alterations and amendments?--This will neither remove, nor remedy the evil. Alter and amend as you pleaſe, alterations and amendments will ſtill be found wanting; for it will not be poſſible to attain perfection, go on ever ſo long in this track. Conſider moreover, that theſe alterations will not appear equally neceſſary to all men. Difference of ſentiments and opinions will cauſe men to ſee them in different lights: perhaps they will not appear at all times in the ſame light, even to the ſame man; for I queſtion, were we to ſubmit a reviſion of the Articles to a ſingle

perſon,

perſon, whether this perſon would eaſily ſatisfy himſelf, even at the time; much leſs remain ſatisfied, if, after a ſeries of years and continued application and ſtudy, he were to review and reconſider his own determinations. Be this as it may; one thing I am ſure of,--- he would not be able to ſatisfy other men.

No method then ſeems to remain but that which I have ſuggeſted above; namely, reaſonable allowance on one ſide, and reaſonable compliance on the other: and this I think not only juſtifiable, but required by the principles I have endeavoured to lay down and explain.

In general, I know conciliating meaſures are ſeldom agreeable to principals of any party. Violence and moderation cannot poſſibly accord. Propoſitions of this nature therefore will probably, by one ſet of men, be ſuppoſed to proceed from want of zeal and ſincerity in religion; by another, from a ſervile ſpirit and contracted notions of liberty. But, if I know my own heart, I am neither inſincere in the cauſe of religion, nor indifferent to that of

liberty. I truly believe and revere the religion of Chriſt, as it is revealed in the Goſpel; and as truly believe it to be profeſſed in greater purity and perfection in the church of England than in any other church.---On the other hand, I think every one has a right, an unalienable right, to liberty of opinion; and that no church can require ſuch implicit belief and aſſent to injunctions and articles, as muſt neceſſarily ſubvert this liberty; otherwiſe innumerable innocent perſons (innocent, becauſe they cannot command their belief) would be totally excluded from all religious communion, and thereby be deprived of the greateſt bleſſing that God has in this world indulged to intelligent beings. General belief and approbation, with acquieſcence and conformity, is all that either is, or can be, required. It is all that the church has a right to require:--I will further add,---all that the ſpirit of her acts or injunctions ſeems to require.

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SERMON V.

A due reverence of Religion, of Moral Virtue, and of Laws and Government, neceſſary to the peace and welfare of nations.

Preached in Greenwich Church on Friday, December 13, 1776, being the day appointed for a general Faſt.

LUKE xix. 41, 42.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

Saying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!——

SUCH was the mournful exclamation of our bleſſed Saviour, when, approaching the walls of Jeruſalem, and muſing on the crimes of that impious city, he revolved in his mind thoſe dire and terrible judgments

which he foreſaw were impending, and about to overwhelm it with dreadful deſtruction. *The days ſhall come upon thee*, ſays he prophetically, *that thine enemies ſhall caſt a trench about thee, and compaſs thee round, and keep thee in on every ſide; and ſhall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee: and they ſhall not leave in thee one ſtone upon another, becauſe thou kneweſt not the time of thy viſitation.* ver. 43, &c.-- Jeruſalem, if we may rely upon the authority of hiſtory, was arrived at the higheſt pitch of vice and wickedneſs; *the meaſure of her iniquities was full.* Every means and endeavour to reclaim her from her ſinful ways had proved ineffectual. The prophets, which had been ſent to forewarn her of her danger, ſhe had derided, or put to death:* and even that greateſt of all prophets, the Lord of life, who ſo kindly and affectionately bewailed the calamities impending over her in theſe lamenting ſtrains, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!* even him was ſhe

* Luke xi. 47, &c. to 52.

ſhe then meditating how to betray, and deliver into the hands of his enemies. Moved by her repeated crimes, and the hardneſs and impenitence of her heart, God at length determined, by means of thoſe inſtruments of his wrath the Romans, to inflict his ſevereſt judgments upon her, and to make her a fearful example, to that and every future generation, of the great and terrible danger of incenſing his indignation and reſentment. The *ſiege and deſtruction of Jeruſalem, undertaken and effected ſoon after by Titus, fulfilled this tremendous purpoſe, and completed, in a ſignal and exemplary manner, the prophecy of our bleſſed Saviour before recited, to which the text was an immediate preface.

By reaſoning inductively from this ſacred paſſage, we may collect, that there are certain things belonging to the peace of every city or kingdom, the neglect and diſregard of which is generally followed by ſome great and terrible judgment or national calamity. *If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!*

To

* Vide Joſeph. de Bello Jud.

To endeavour to inveſtigate and develope theſe things, may not be an improper application of the preſent intereſting ſolemnity.

I. A DUE ſenſe and obſervance of religion ſeems to be the firſt of thoſe things which are abſolutely neceſſary to the peace and happineſs of every kingdom. This, whether we conſider religion in its natural or ſupernatural influence, appears equally clear and perſpicuous.

RELIGION, conſidered in its natural influence operating upon the heart and affections, has a direct tendency to work all thoſe ſalutary effects which are invariably productive of peace and proſperity.---An aweful regard to the will of a Supreme Being, righteous, and juſt, and merciful in himſelf, and requiring theſe perfections of his creatures, muſt neceſſarily tend to promote the obſervance and practice of them:---but righteouſneſs, and juſtice and mercy, are the baſis and foundation of all earthly felicity; no ſtate or kingdom can be happy without them; anarchy and confuſion would be the certain conſequence of neglecting

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ing or laying them aſide. Religion then, as the moſt effectual, if not only, mean of eſtabliſhing theſe things, muſt be conſidered as eſſentially neceſſary to the peace of every kingdom; as one of thoſe fundamental articles, without which no community can be flouriſhing or happy. Men, if they are not faſcinated by prejudice, muſt admit and bear teſtimony to the truth of this poſition. Atheiſm and irreligion, what are they productive of?---Of every evil and calamity that the imagination can conceive.---But the temper and diſpoſition excited and cheriſhed by religion, is compoſed of meekneſs, temperance, patience, and charity, the love of truth, the love of juſtice, the love of mercy:---And are not theſe the ſeeds of proſperity? are they not the germes of happineſs? It would be an abuſe of time even to ſtay to demonſtrate it.

THIS truth will receive further confirmation from the teſtimony of hiſtory.

HISTORY has been ſaid, and I fear with too much truth, to be little more than a relation and detail of the crimes and wickedneſs

neſs of mankind. Thoſe tragical ſcenes and calamities, which chiefly engage the attention, and are commonly conſidered as the moſt brilliant parts of hiſtory, too clearly and unhappily prove this fact; they generally have been the work or contrivance of impious and wicked men. What happier effects could one reaſonably expect from ſuch pernicious cauſes! Men, who have thrown off all ſenſe of religion, who are equally regardleſs of the favour or the diſpleaſure of the Supreme Being, can have no check to reſtrain them from committing any enormity and exceſs that their imaginations may conceive; their luſts and paſſions muſt be their only guides upon every occaſion:---but the luſts and paſſions of men, uncontrouled by religion, will be everſive of all happineſs. Thoſe fiends, or monſters in human ſhape, *Alexander the Sixth and Cæſar Borgia, did not ſcruple to deluge all Italy with blood, in order to gratify their ambitious and ſenſual deſires:--but †Ariſtides, ſurnamed the Juſt, inſtantly rejected the propoſal of Themiſtocles, becauſe it was inconſiſtent with rectitude

* Vide Guicciardini dell' Iſtoria d' Italia, lib. 5.

† Vide Plutarch. de Vitâ Themiſtoclis.

rectitude and the principles of religious obligation.* Nothing but religion can reſtrain the wild and licentious paſſions of men. This is ſo fully and evidently proved by hiſtory, that it cannot have eſcaped the moſt ſuperficial reader: it does not ſo properly admit of argument or ratiocination, as reſt upon obſervation and experience.

THE ſame truth will appear yet clearer, if from the natural we proceed to conſider the ſupernatural influence of religion. Reference to the tremendous judgments of God, recorded in the ſacred Scriptures, will place this queſtion beyond the reach of doubt.

WHETHER there may be any intrinſic or inherent excellence in religion, and the ſeveral duties it preſcribes, which may have determined

* THE magnanimity of this virtuous Athenian in ſolliciting a reconciliation with his avowed and moſt bitter enemy, the night preceding the battle of Salamis, out of a principle of duty to his country, with the whole of that heroic tranſaction, is one of the fineſt anecdotes of antiquity, and what cannot be ſufficiently attended to by thoſe whoſe ſituation introduces them to the charge and direction of public affairs.

mined the Divine Nature to enjoin the obſervance of it; or whether God may, in mercy to mankind, have appointed the inſtitution of it, chiefly as a mean or expedient conducive to their felicity, does not ſo immediately enter into the preſent enquiry: one thing only is to be obſerved, I mean, that God has enjoined it, and has alſo annexed to the obſervance or neglect of it the ſanction of rewards and puniſhments, extending, not ſolely to individuals, but even to communities. This is ſo particularly ſpecified in Scripture, as not to admit of diſpute. The various hiſtories, contained in the ſacred writings, are chiefly relations of the ſucceſſes or misfortunes of particular nations, expreſsly appointed by God, proportionally to their obſervance or neglect of his ordinances. War, peſtilence and famine, are deſcribed as inſtruments of his wrath, and wicked men as miniſters of his vengeance. *The locuſt, the canker-worm, the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm,* are by himſelf called *his great army,* Joel ii. 25. *And the whirlwind of the Lord, even a grievous whirlwind,* we are told, *goeth forth with fury, and falleth upon the hedd of the wicked.* Jer. xxx. 23.

THE frequent and repeated warnings to rebellious cities and kingdoms, recorded in the prophetical writings, are clear and diſtinct proofs of what is here aſſerted; and the fate and cataſtrophy of ſuch as perſevered in their apoſtacy, are undeniable confirmations of it. God, in fine, will be obeyed. Though plenteous in mercy, he is yet terrible in judgment; he ſhowereth down his bleſſings upon the righteous, but upon the wicked he heapeth deſtruction.

PARTICULAR exceptions may poſſibly be offered to what is here only laid down in general, but particular exceptions will not ſuffice to overturn a general rule; and, I think, it can ſcarcely have eſcaped the obſervation of any one verſed in hiſtory, that thoſe cities and kingdoms, which have been deſcribed by ſacred and profane writers as ſignal examples of national misfortune and diſtreſs, have been deſcribed by them as equally ſignal ones of national impiety and irreligion.--- Religion then, whether we conſider it in its natural or ſupernatural influence, appears to be alike neceſſary to the peace and welfare of kingdoms.

II. REGARD

II. REGARD to moral virtue is a ſecond mean requiſite to this great and important end.

No propoſition was ever more fallacious in itſelf, or more pernicious in its conſequences, than that private vices are public benefits. Taken at large, and in a general ſenſe, it is abſurd and inconſiſtent; and even in that particular one to which it was firſt applied, for inſtance luxury, it is apparently falſe. This has been fully and ſatisfactorily proved by an excellent writer of our own nation, Sir William Temple. Allow me to cite his authority upon this occaſion. "Some of our maxims "(ſays he) are not ſo certain, as they are cur- "rent, in our common politics. As firſt, "that example and encouragement of exceſs "and luxury, if employed in the conſump- "tion of native commodities, is of advantage "to trade. It may be ſo to that which im- "poveriſhes, but it is not to that which "enriches a country; and is indeed leſs pre- "judicial, if it lie in native, than in foreign "wares. But the cuſtom or humour of luxury "and expence cannot ſtop at certain bounds; "what begins in native will proceed in foreign "commodities;

" commodities; and though the example " ariſe among idle perſons, yet the imitation " will run into all degrees, even of thoſe " men by whoſe induſtry the nation ſubſiſts. " And beſides, the more of our own we " ſpend, the leſs we ſhall have to ſend abroad; " and ſo it will come to paſs, that while we " drive a vaſt trade, yet, by buying much " more than we ſell, we ſhall come to be " poor: whereas, when we drove a very ſmall " traffic abroad, yet, by ſelling ſo much more " than we bought, we were very rich in " proportion to our neighbours." Vol. I. p. 197. edit. 8vo.

NOTHING can be clearer or more concluſive than this reaſoning; but the inſtance to which it applies being of a partial and merely political nature, it becomes in a manner unintereſting when compared with thoſe further arguments which may be urged againſt luxury, and in common with it vice in general, on account of thoſe fatal effects which they produce upon the manners of mankind. Vice and luxury have the moſt extenſive and moſt pernicious influence; they corrupt every noble

and generous principle of the heart, and poiſon the very ſprings of happineſs. Folly, diſſipation, profuſion, neglect of domeſtic duties, and extravagant purſuit of vain and phantaſtic pleaſures, are the firſt and immediate effects of them; the end and concluſion is general ignorance, and a total depravity of mind and manners. In this wretched and deplorable ſtate of morals, religion too neceſſarily degenerates into ſuperſtition or enthuſiaſm; for corruption in the one is certain to communicate corruption to the other, and this to the completion of ruin. It ſeems therefore impoſſible for any country to be flouriſhing or happy, where moral virtue is diſregarded and ſuperſeded by vice and luxury.

III. The laſt thing which I ſhall note as requiſite to the welfare and peace of nations, is due reverence of the laws, and ſubordination to legal and conſtitutional authorities.

All government, if we reſpect outward form ſolely, may be conſidered as derived from the people; as virtually founded in mutual com-

compact and agreement: but, if we aſcend to its primary ſource and origin, we ſhall find that it deduces its authority from God: for ſuch being the imperfection of human nature, as to make ſome form of government neceſſary, in order, jointly with religion, to prevent thoſe enormities and crimes, which the unreſtrained paſſions and appetites of mankind would otherwiſe hapleſsly be the occaſion of, it has pleaſed God to enjoin obedience to ſuch form of government, as by the general conſent of the community, either formally or virtually given, may have been conſtituted and approved of. *Submit yourſelves to every ordinance of man*, ſays Saint Peter, (1 Epiſt. ii. 13.) *for the Lord's ſake: whether it be to the king, as ſupreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are ſent by him for the puniſhment of evil doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well.*--- Government is rightly called an ordinance of man; but the end or object of it being *the puniſhment of evil doers, and the praiſe of them that do well*, it has the ſanction of God, and we are commanded to be ſubordinate to it *for the Lord's ſake.*---Whoever therefore either endeavours to ſubvert the eſtabliſhed govern-

ment of his country, or profeſſedly violates the laws of it, is equally guilty of rebellion to God, and of treaſon to his country. The reaſon is obvious.---Government is inſtituted *for the puniſhment of evil doers, and the praiſe of them that do well*; that is, it is inſtituted for the protection and happineſs of mankind: God therefore, in mercy to mankind, has commanded our obedience to it.

Not a ſingle inſtance is to be found in hiſtory of a nation's ſubſiſting without ſome inſtitution or form of government; nor any of its being flouriſhing and happy without ſubordination to ſuch government, and due reverence and obſervance of the laws. But innumerable are the examples of rapine, of bloodſhed, of devaſtation, and of crimes and enormities of every kind, ariſing from the diſturbance and violation of them. Laws and government therefore have ever been revered by wiſe and good men in all ages as ſacred; and though it reſts upon the wiſdom and diſcretion of mankind to conſtitute and eſtabliſh ſuch form of government amongſt themſelves, as, from peculiar contingencies of climate

climate or character, or other incidents, may ſeem beſt adapted to promote and ſecure the liberties and happineſs of the community; yet, when it is ſo conſtituted and agreed upon, whether formally or virtually, the end propoſed being anſwered, it is moſt wicked and flagitious in any one to endeavour to diſturb and throw it into confuſion. It is then of divine authority; and nothing can be more intereſting to the general welfare, than that it be properly revered and ſupported.*

If the truth of theſe poſitions be admitted, we need not look far for the origin of thoſe evils, the conſequences of which we are called upon by public authority to deprecate and endeavour to avert by faſting and humiliation. There never was an age when irreligion, immo-

* "Whoever, either ruler or ſubject, by force goes "about to invade the rights of either prince or people, "and lays the foundation for overturning the conſtitu- "tion and frame of any juſt government, is highly "guilty of the greateſt crime, I think, a man is capable "of, being to anſwer for all thoſe miſchiefs of blood, "rapine and deſolation, which the breaking to pieces of "governments bring on a country." Locke of Civil Government, book ii. ch. 19. § 230.

immorality, and irreverence of all order and law and government, were more openly and daringly avowed, than at preſent. I appeal to the experience of every one, to the common occurrences of each day, for the truth of what I here aſſert. The natural conſequences of ſuch licentiouſneſs I have endeavoured, in the courſe of my ſermon, to point out. The reality of theſe conſequences we are fatally beginning to feel; we are haſtening very faſt to confuſion. The preſent troubles, unleſs it pleaſe God ſpeedily to ſtop them, muſt end in ruin: *they are the beginning of ſorrows.* A train of calamities is behind, and follows cloſe in the rear. Civil war and rebellion are maladies that convulſe the very vitals of a ſtate, and endanger its immediate diſſolution: and though the cauſe, like a match from the train when it has caught fire, be removed, yet the exploſion will go on, and involve every thing within reach of it in ruin and deſolation.* It appears to be an eaſy ſolution of our preſent troubles

* Non ſempre per il rimuovere delle cagioni ſi rimuovono gli effetti, i quali da quelle hanno avuto la prima origine.

Guicciard. lib. i. pag. 14.

troubles indeed, to attribute them to the ſiniſter artifices of turbulent and deſigning men impoſing upon the credulity and ſimplicity of others: and it is not to be denied, that the avarice and ambition of individuals, co-operating with miſconceptions of liberty and miſguided zeal in the people at large, both here and in America, may have been the occaſion, if not of producing, yet at leaſt of promoting, them; they have helped to fan the fire which at preſent threatens us with a general conflagration. Mock patriots, like falſe prophets, are ever pregnant with confuſion. But theſe are only ſecondary cauſes; the primary ones are derived from a more remote fountain: our own vices and wickedneſs, expoſing us to the juſt judgments of God, are the firſt and chief cauſe of them. God, when it pleaſeth him, *bringeth the counſels of the wicked to nought; he maketh them to fall into their own ſnare, and to periſh through their own imaginations. Such therefore as truſt in him need not be afraid of what man can do unto them.* But how ſhall *we* truſt in him, whoſe ſins are daily multiplying before him, and are unrepented of? How ſhall *we* hope

for his protection, who have not obeyed his voice, nor kept his covenant, nor done that which he hath commanded us to do?---- Need I, as a proof of this charge and accuſation, remind you of our infidelity? of our licentiouſneſs, our luxury, our diſſipation? Need I mention the frequent adulteries which are openly brought into our courts of juſtice as pleas for divorces, without the leaſt ſhame or puniſhment of thoſe who tranſgreſs? Need I animadvert upon the neglect of marriage, and that confuſion and ſubverſion of all diſtinction between pure and impure connexions, and their reſpective conſequences? Need I take notice of the contempt and violation of all authority and law, daily manifeſted to us in corruption, in perjury, in unparallelled invaſions of each other's property, and in the moſt daring and infamous libels and invectives againſt religion, againſt government, and againſt every ſacred and reſpectable character?---The notoriety of theſe facts renders any attempt of this nature unneceſſary.----And what are we to expect from ſuch enormities and exceſs? *Will not God viſit for theſe things; will not his ſoul be avenged of ſuch a nation as this?*

this? Jer. v. 9.----*O daughter of my people, gird thee with ſackcloth, and wallow thyſelf in aſhes; make thee mourning as for an only ſon, moſt bitter lamentation.* Jer. vi. 26.

No people in the univerſe are indebted to Providence for more or greater bleſſings than ourſelves. We live under an eſtabliſhment that is the wonder and envy of the world. The Reformation has eventually ſecured our religious liberties, and the Revolution our civil ones from all injury and oppreſſion, either of ſuperſtitious zeal or deſpotic power. Nothing but our own wickedneſs, our vices and follies, can endanger either the one or the other. If a general and total depravity of mind ſeize us; if we relinquiſh every religious, every virtuous, every patriotic principle, we may eaſily loſe the bleſſings we enjoy, we may proſtitute, may ſell them. But if we are obſervant of our duty to God, to our king, and to our country, this never can happen; we ſhall then have the united protection of heaven and earth, of the laws both of God and man.---Let us then concur with the piety of our Sovereign, whoſe example in all

all goodneſs even malice muſt commend, in humiliating ourſelves before God with faſting and praying, and in intreating him to ſpare and to forgive his people. Let us ſeriouſly begin a reformation of our lives and manners, and return to a due ſenſe of our ſeveral duties. Let us lay aſide all diviſions and diſputes amongſt ourſelves; and let us pray for our deluded and miſguided brethren, both here and in America, (for ſuch let us in charity ſuppoſe them) who have been the authors or fomentors of our preſent troubles, that it may pleaſe God to bring them back to their allegiance, and thus reunite the divided branches of this, till now happy, empire, to the glory of his own name, the peace of the world, and the increaſe of love and charity amongſt all the members of that holy church which he hath founded and eſtabliſhed by his Son Jeſus Chriſt.

SER-

SERMON VI.

Of Moral Advantages to be derived from travelling in Italy.

Preached in the Britiſh Chapel at Leghorn in May 1766, before Sir HORACE MANN, Bart. K. B. Envoy Extraordinary to the Court of Tuſcany; Sir JOHN DICK, Bart. Conſul at Leghorn; the Right Honourable the Earls COWPER and TYLNEY, and ſeveral other Gentlemen of diſtinction, aſſembled at Leghorn on account of the Games exhibited there by the different Nations and Factories, in honour of their Royal Highneſſes the Great Duke and Ducheſs of Tuſcany, on their firſt viſiting that City.

PROV. i. 20, 21.

Wiſdom crieth without, ſhe uttereth her voice in the ſtreets: ſhe crieth in the chief place of concourſe, in the openings of the gates: in the city ſhe uttereth her words.——

THE progreſs and improvement of the mind in virtue depends principally upon its being properly trained and diſciplined. If it be early inſtituted in wiſe

wiſe and laudable purſuits, it can ſcarcely fail of attaining to conſiderable perfection; but if it be neglected, or ſuffered to run wild, and to follow its own imaginations, it muſt be next to a prodigy if it take not a vicious turn, and in time become totally depraved.

Such order and œconomy ſeems neceſſary in a probationary ſtate; becauſe, if perfection were the effect of original endowment, there could be no merit in virtue, ſince it would be nothing more than the reſult of natural temper and conſtitution; but in the preſent form and arrangement of the mind, all improvement depending upon the exertion of our moral and intellectual powers, to reſiſt the allurements of vice, and make proficiency in virtue, is, relatively ſpeaking, deſerving of juſt praiſe and reward; and God ſeems to beſtow upon thoſe perſons, to whom this character is due, a peculiar ſhare of grace, by making virtue, after a while, to become not only eaſy, but even replete with more real ſatisfaction to them, than they could have derived from the gratifications of vice or the indulgence of ſenſual deſire.

SUCH being the gradation of moral improvement, it is of infinite importance to the mind to be directed to the purſuit of ſuch objects as may aſſimilate and be nearly allied to virtue; for being once exerciſed in ſuch purſuits, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe that it will habitually proceed in them, and at length make conſiderable progreſs in real wiſdom.

THAT every ſituation in life will afford peculiar opportunities of attending to ſuch improvement, is evident from the ſlighteſt obſervation: it only requires thought and application to diſcern and avail of them.

AMONGST other means adapted to this end, may, I think, be enumerated Travel, or the viſiting of foreign countries: for either nature or religion or polity have ſo wonderfully diverſified the different parts of the world, as to make them replete with inſtruction, and formed to excite in a reflective mind many uſeful obſervations. *Wiſdom*, ſays Solomon, *crieth without; ſhe uttereth her voice in the ſtreets; ſhe crieth in the chief place of concourſe, in the openings of the gates: in the city ſhe uttereth her words.*---

words.----Which paſſage, whatever may be the literal interpretation of it, is ſo expreſſive of that wiſdom and improvement which is to be derived from attending to local ſituations, as to warrant the hazarding of a few reflections in further illuſtration of the ſubject.

PERMIT me then to take occaſion from it of pointing out to you ſome ſingular moral advantages which may be derived from our preſent ſituation, from viſiting or travelling in this country. No part of the habitable globe ſeems to abound with more uſeful inſtruction, whether we refer to thoſe wonderful ſcenes, or thoſe ſtill more wonderful events, with which both the natural and civil ſtate of it are ſo diſtinguiſhably marked.---The ſubject is particularly intereſting, and cannot fail of affording us ſome pleaſing, and, I think, even profitable, reflections.

I. THE firſt and moſt obvious advantage deducible from our preſent ſituation, ſeems to be that zeal and emulation to excel in virtue which we muſt neceſſarily feel within ourſelves when we are reminded of thoſe great and

and illuſtrious characters which have rendered this country ſo famous in the annals of mankind. Example is allowed to have a ſuperior advantage over all other incitements to virtue, inaſmuch as it is almoſt impoſſible to contemplate an eminent or diſtinguiſhed character without glowing with a deſire of imitation. The mind thirſts after the ſame praiſe, the ſame glory and applauſe, which every one is ready to beſtow upon conſpicuous merit. This zeal and emulation grows ſtrong and importunate, in proportion as the characters we admire have lain under any peculiar diſadvantage, ſo as to make it evident that we ought to have an equal, if not ſuperior degree of virtue, to what we ſo much applaud. Here ſhame enters into the liſt of thoſe many reaſons which call upon us to exert ourſelves into ſome degree of imitation.

Now, in regard to this country, nothing can more deſervedly excite our emulation than the characters which it has produced. A ſplendid train of heroes and patriots, devoting their lives to the glory and good of their country, paſs on, in uninterrupted ſucceſſion, from the beginning to the end of

the Republick.---The early periods of the Roman hiſtory, in particular, are crowded with facts of the ſublimeſt nature; every page is productive of ſome great event or illuſtrious action. Religious reverence, patriotic ſpirit, magnanimity, and a ſacred and inviolable regard to the general weal, denoted the public character of the Romans, as piety, temperance, patience and induſtry, did their private. It was not without reaſon therefore that the Epirote, in his deſcription of Rome, obſerved, that "it was a temple, and its ſenate an "aſſembly of kings."

WITH the introduction of luxury indeed came a gradual decline of manners, and the loſs of liberty. A diſmal reverſe of things now broke in upon the order ſo beautifully eſtabliſhed, and threw every thing into anarchy and confuſion. The diſtraction, the crimes, the tragedies that enſued, are far beyond deſcription or the power of utterance.---Here then let us pauſe, and allow a moment for humanity to weep.

AFTER a night of horror, heightened with every circumſtance of diſtreſs, a fair and celeſtial

leſtial ſtar dawning in the eaſtern hemiſphere, began to ſhed its benignant influence over this wretched and diſtracted country. A new order and ſucceſſion of great and illuſtrious actions now ſhone forth. The ſtern and rigid virtues of the Heathen were replaced by the mild and more amiable ones of the Chriſtian hero; and the votaries of liberty were ſucceeded by the martyrs of religion.

The firſt converts to Chriſtianity were unparallelled examples of innocence and virtue; their lives were as pure as their religion was perfect.---What inſtances of faith, what examples of piety, what acts of love and charity, do not the early hiſtories of the church abound with! The Heathens themſelves, tho' enemies to Chriſtianity, have not failed to bear teſtimony to this important truth.---The primitive Chriſtians diſcovered ſo much fortitude under their perſecutions and ſufferings, that the ſurrounding ſpectators were aſtoniſhed and confounded. The firmneſs and courage of former ages was loſt and abſorbed in this more reſplendent heroiſm; and thouſands of unbelievers, on being witneſſes to ſuch ſu-

pernatural conſtancy, were theirſelves converted to that faith, in perſecution of which they had brought theſe very martyrs to the croſs, and had ſhed ſuch torrents of chriſtian blood.

DUE conſideration of this wonderful and aſtoniſhing circumſtance ſhould ſerve as a reproof, one would think, of that lukewarm diſpoſition, or ſpirit of religion, which ſo ſtrongly marks and characteriſes the preſent age. Theſe men, who lived ſo near to the time of the firſt promulgation of the goſpel, and were fully appriſed of that evidence and teſtimony which ſupported it, thought it worth their while to ſacrifice, not only all worldly views of comfort and advantage, but even life itſelf, to the glory of thoſe hopes, with which conviction of the Chriſtian cauſe had inſpired them. Can any thing more ſtrongly condemn the preſumption of thoſe raſh and inconſiderate men, who are accuſtomed to make light of, and even treat with irreverence, the myſteries of our holy faith?

ALAS! with the decline of pure religion, as before with that of liberty, a freſh cloud of

of darkneſs and ignorance and miſery of every kind, overſhadowed again this beautiful but devoted country. Superſtition and tyranny, expanding their ſable wings, hovered over it with dire and dreadful note, threatening general deſtruction and eternal night.---But let us not turn to, but rather avert our eyes from, this dark ſcene, and proceed in our inveſtigation of the ſubject before us.

II. A SECOND advantage, of equal weight and conſideration with the preceding one, to be derived from viſiting this country, is that ſerious turn of thought and reflection which obſervation of the various changes and revolutions it has undergone muſt naturally excite in us.

WHAT mind, ſuſceptible of impreſſion, can help lamenting the melancholy fate that has attended, not only the empire of this great country, but even its cities and public buildings! The traveller can ſcarcely ſtep without trampling upon the ruins, either of temples, or palaces, or aqueducts, or triumphal arches, or other great and ſorrowful remains

of ancient ſplendour and magnificence.---
" Here (ſays the guide) ſtood the temple of
" Jupiter, or Mars, or Romulus, thoſe vain
" and feeble protectors of the Roman com-
" monwealth.---There was the villa of Cato,
" of Cicero, of Lucullus.----Yonder are the
" few and wretched remains of a great and
" populous city. What hurry and ſtir of
" buſineſs, what plans of wealth and grandeur
" were forming, methinks, by the active ſpirits
" of that buſy ſcene, while it was yet in its
" flouriſhing and opulent ſtate!---Behold! it
" is now become a deſert or heap of ruins,
" *a poſſeſſion for the bittern, a hiding-place for*
" *the viper and the lizard.* An earthquake or
" ſubterraneous fire has overturned it from its
" very foundation, and the angel of wrath has
" *ſwept it with the beſom of deſtruction.*"---

THE face and appearance of nature has not undergone leſs viſible change than that of art. Whole tracts of country, which formerly ſwarmed with inhabitants, are now almoſt entirely abandoned, ſo that hands are even wanting to cultivate the ground: thoſe few poor wretches who do ſtill remain, and whom poverty

poverty has doomed to continue their abode, and forbade to remove to healthier climates, are ſo pale and emaciated with fevers and ſickneſs, that they appear more like tenants of the grave than inhabitants of the earth.--- In ſome places mountains have ariſen out of the middle of lakes; and hills, which were formerly covered with trees and verdure, lie ſmoking under the aſhes of volcano's; an aweful memorial of the incertitude and changeableneſs even of thoſe things which we are wont to conſider as of the moſt permanent duration.

It is not ſurely poſſible to contemplate theſe ſcenes without being ſenſibly moved and affected. We muſt neceſſarily be led by them to conſider the precarious and uncertain ſtate of all ſublunary exiſtence; muſt learn to be humble and patient and contented, and to reſign ourſelves entirely to the will of that infinite Being in whoſe power is the abſolute and ſole diſpoſal of the univerſe. Can it but check our pride to perceive that the utmoſt effort of man is not able to produce any thing which ſhall ſurvive the limits of a few ſhort ages?

ages? Will it not moderate our deſires, to obſerve that the glory and ſplendour of this world is of ſo ſhort duration?---Shall we repine at, or be ſenſible of, our own diſappointments and misfortunes, when we reflect upon the ruin of cities, and empires, and even Nature herſelf, and conſider that deſtruction and miſery which has involved and overwhelmed ſuch innumerable generations?---Alas! let the reſtleſs and inſatiate ſpirit of man reflect but upon this, and he will learn contentment.

" In my return out of Aſia, (ſays Sulpicius " in a conſolatory letter to Cicero) as I was " ſailing from Ægina to Megara, I amuſed " myſelf with contemplating the circumja- " cent countries. Behind me lay Ægina, be- " fore me Megara; on my right I ſaw Pi- " ræeus, and on my left Corinth. Theſe ci- " ties, once ſo flouriſhing and magnificent, " now preſented nothing to my view but a " ſad ſpectacle of deſolation. Alas! I ſaid " to myſelf, ſhall ſuch a ſhort-lived creature " as man complain, when one of his ſpecies " falls either by the hand of violence, or by

" the

" the common courſe of nature, whilſt in " this narrow compaſs ſo many great and " glorious cities, formed for a much longer " duration, thus lie extended in ruins? Re- " member then, Oh my heart! the general " lot to which man is born, and let that " thought ſuppreſs thy unreaſonable mur- " murs."*

SUCH were the moral and philoſophic reflections of a Heathen! But,

III. I PASS on to point out a third advantage, and the laſt, of which I ſhall at preſent make mention, ariſing from viſiting this country; which is, the favourable opportunity it affords of converſing with the fine arts. Theſe we perceive in equal elegance and perfection, whether we contemplate the beautiful remains of antiquity, or the exquiſite performances of more modern ages.

Now, it is a certain and eſtabliſhed truth, that the impreſſions ariſing from the beautiful productions

* See Melmouth's Tranſlation of Cicero's Letters to ſeveral of his Friends. Book xi. Letter 3.

productions of the imagination have an immediate and direct tendency to diffuſe over the mind a correſpondent elegance of ſentiment and diſpoſition; they ſoften the wild and ſavage ferocity of nature, and diſpoſe it to ſenſibility and gentleneſs.

THESE are the firſt and immediate effects of them.----The moral influence of theſe effects, with their reſpective advantages and diſadvantages, depend almoſt entirely upon ourſelves. If we are attentive and careful to direct this ſenſibility of diſpoſition to the welfare and good of mankind, it will incline us to mercy and charity, and thoſe amiable virtues upon which the happineſs of ſocial life depends: but if we ſuffer it to take its courſe, undirected and unreſtrained, it will then only enervate and debilitate the mind, give it a ſtronger propenſity to vice, and render it at the ſame time leſs able to reſiſt and overcome it. It depends therefore upon ourſelves, what moral influence our intercourſe with the fine arts, and the impreſſions they may leave upon the mind, ſhall have; and it ſeems to have been for this reaſon that ſome of the wiſeſt

of

of the ancients were doubtful, whether it might not be more adviſeable to forego the advantages to be derived from them, than run the riſk of their not being properly and uſefully directed and applied. With care and attention, however, they may certainly prove of conſiderable uſe and advantage, ſince they cannot fail of giving an exquiſite ſenſibility to the mind, and of attuning and making it accord with the rules of proportion and harmony, which approximate and have a near affinity to thoſe of virtue.

Such are the principal moral advantages to be derived from travelling in this country; advantages of no inconſiderable import in the conduct and œconomy of life, as they equally tend to improve and delight the mind.

Other advantages indeed, and by no means inconſiderable ones, are to be derived from the ſame ſource; but as they are of a different turn, and more properly relate to civil than moral or religious improvement, I flatter myſelf that I ſhall be excuſed if I paſs them over.

ALLOW me to conclude with a reflection, not wholly inapplicable to the deſign of this diſcourſe.

OUR preſent ſituation is of the moſt nice and moſt intereſting nature. We are in a country where wiſdom opens all her treaſures to us, but where vice and folly are aſſiduouſly engaged in endeavouring to prevent our profiting by them. The climate and manners of this country breathe an air of pleaſure; they invite, they ſollicit us to gaiety and diſſipation. But if we give way to their ſeduction, or are captivated by the blandiſhments with which they endeavour to allure and entice us, we ſhall be miſerably diſappointed, ſhall loſe or fruſtrate every advantage which is now offered us. It was by reſiſting vice and pleaſure that the Romans arrived at that tranſcendent grandeur which attracted the notice and admiration of all mankind: it was by yielding to them, that Hannibal loſt the empire of the world.—Conſider then, how great is the danger of complying with, how infinite the glory of triumphing over, them.

GREAT-

GREAT-BRITAIN, whence we derive and boaſt our origin, is now arrived at the ſummit of renown. The excellence of her government, the wiſdom of her laws, the purity of her religion, not to mention her ſuperiority in ſcience, in commerce, and in wealth and magnificence; all theſe, illuſtrated by an uninterrupted ſeries of victory and ſucceſs, are become a daily ſubject, not only of the converſation, but of the wonder of all Europe. We ourſelves muſt be ſenſible of deriving conſiderable advantages from this circumſtance; for I queſtion whether the name of a Roman, while Rome was in proſperity, was more honoured and revered, than is that of a Briton at this time. There is an obligation therefore of a very ſingular nature incumbent upon us, to act and conduct ourſelves with ſuitable propriety and dignity of character.

EVERY one will naturally be obſervant of our manners and behaviour, and curiouſly examine, whether they may correſpond with that idea which they have formed of our national character; and if they find themſelves diſappointed in the compariſon, they will not only

only gradually ſlight and neglect us, but in time leſs revere that country, of which, of courſe, they muſt conſider us as a conſtituent part. We are therefore ſolemnly adjured by our religion, by our country, and by a ſenſe of our own honour, to act with peculiar prudence upon this occaſion, and to endeavour to adorn and perfect our minds in all manner of wiſdom.---Then, after dropping a commiſerative tear to the memory of thoſe heroic ſpirits who formerly ſo aggrandized this empire---after lamenting the ruin and reverſe of fortune which it has met with----and after admiring thoſe beautiful veſtiges and moſt exquiſite performances of art, which ſtill denote the luſtre of ancient, and embelliſh modern, Italy---we ſhall return with increaſed zeal and attachment to our own country, and there with reaſon felicitate ourſelves upon the actual exiſtence of thoſe bleſſings and advantages, the loſs of which we are here led, by a ſympathy of nature, to regret and bewail with moral and inſtructive melancholy.